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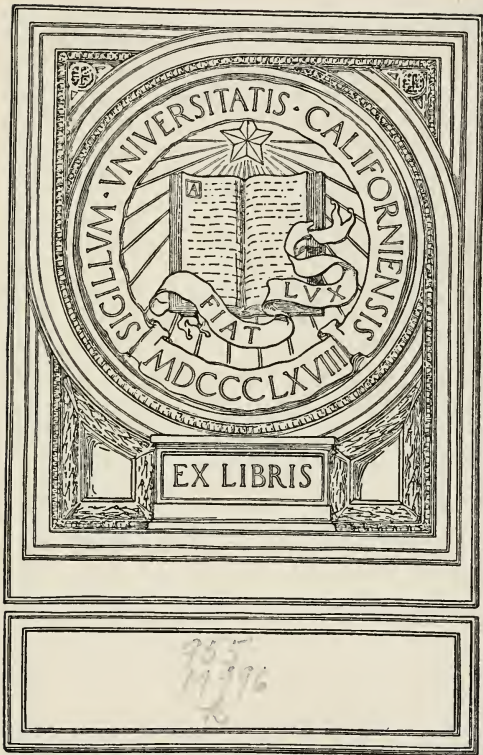
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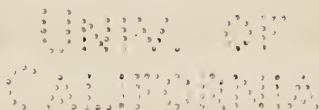
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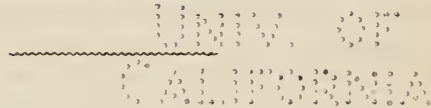
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T H E
K I N G O F T H E H U R O N S .



C H A P T E R I .

“The hour, th’ occasion all your skill demands,
A leaky ship, embayed by dangerous lands.”—*Falconer.*

It was during a violent storm in the spring of 1708, that a French brig of war, seriously crippled, was discovered in the bay of New York, showing signals of distress, and approaching, with indirect course, to the harbor. There was, of course, not wanting a race of panic-makers in those days—progenitors, doubtless, of a similar class in our own—who at once saw in the unfortunate vessel an estray from a belligerent fleet, hovering close at hand, and ready to descend, with fatal swoop, upon the long-threatened city. Rumors, indeed, of such an armada had long been rife, and had, perhaps, accomplished their intended effect, in restraining the English colony from any vigorous efforts at the conquest of Canada—an enterprise on which more words than wadding had been wasted, but which, of course, was not to be undertaken while any peril impended over its own capital. France might thus be compared to some good dame, who watches from a distance the quarrels between her neighbors’ children and her own, and contents herself with shaking a stick at

the former, while in reality too indolent, or too much occupied in more important business, to fulfil any of her pantomimic threats. Certain it was, that at this period she meditated no invasion of that embryo metropolis, which reposed, in doubtful security, betwixt two rivers and a picket fence; the latter being denominated by courtesy, a wall, and stretching transversely across the town. The good ship *St. Cloud*, on the contrary, if aught could be judged from her zigzag movements, was approaching the city with anything but alacrity, despite the nautical adage, old, doubtless, as her day, "any port in a storm." Driven from her course, dismasted, and a-leak, she had been tossed for weeks, cork-like, upon the waves, the very plaything of the elements, until all hope of attaining a friendly port was abandoned, and every minor consideration became merged in the instinctive desire for the preservation of life. Foremost to secure their own safety, a reckless portion of the crew had deserted by night in the only boat which had escaped destruction; and it was with no other means of safety for the lives intrusted to his care, that Captain Sill, on discovering himself near the Bay of Manhattan, resolved to seek the harbor of New York. That he anticipated no mitigated fate from his country's enemies, by reason of his disaster, was quite apparent from the anxiety depicted upon his countenance, as he paced the quarter-deck of his vessel, and looked mournfully towards the land. What unusual reason he had to deprecate the approaching calamity will appear more fully, if we descend with him into the cabin, and survey the few, but not unimportant personages, who were under his charge as passengers, and who had vainly anticipated, on leaving home, a safe and speedy voyage to the French colonial capital, Quebec.

"Something must be done by way of disguise," he muttered to himself as he descended the gangway, "it will never do for the baron to enter the city in his proper character. The resident agent of the French monarch among the fastnesses of the northern forests, the friend and ally of the savage Hurons, would have little clemency

to hope for from the incensed colonists of New York : I would not answer even for his life."

A start and surprised look of the speaker terminated this soliloquy, as, entering the cabin, his eyes fell upon a tall, portly man, clad in the habiliments of a sailor, who was pacing the floor with an air of dignity quite at variance with his assumed character.

"It was well thought of, my lord baron," exclaimed the captain, after a moment's gaze at his companion ; "none but Boswain Bill could have fitted you with these garments, and with a little less—excuse me—a little more—you understand me, I presume—you will pass muster as a sailor very well."

"I confess I do not understand what it is that I want a little less and a little more of, Captain Sill," replied the baron, "and if you have any advice to give, speak out and at once, for there is but little time to be wasted."

"Very true, my lord, very true ; if you will excuse me, then, common sailors do not walk with that lofty air ; they do not stand quite as erect ; their chests are less prominent, and—and—they do not speak quite as boldly, or as correctly, as the Baron Montaigne."

"Your honor is quite right," returned the other, changing his whole deportment with a facility that surprised, and forced a smile from the captain ; "Jack Beans can reef a sail, or splice a rope, equal to any man on the *St. Cloud*, and no man can say anything against him, unless it be that he loves his grog and tobacco on a suitable occasion."

"No—no—no—'a suitable occasion' would be the death of you," said Captain Sill, laughing, "all very well but that, though a little too stiff ; I have no doubt you will do very well, but mind and use no such three-deckers in conversation."

"I will, your honor," replied the baron, touching his cap with an air of mock humility, that forced another smile from the commander, and displaying at the same time a hand, which, although of no delicate mould, was scrupulously clean.

“Another thing,” rejoined Sill, “you seem to have overlooked; you surely cannot be mad enough to think such hands will not excite suspicion. Remember the fate of the Scottish Queen. But do not look so puzzled; you must, in short, consent to be literally, as well as figuratively, under a cloud for the present. A little obscuration by mother Earth is all that is necessary: Boswain Bill will do it, and tell him to see that it is well rubbed in, particularly about the finger ends; I think a quarter of an inch is about the fashionable breadth for the nail line.”

“I cannot believe it necessary to descend to these indignities,” said the baron, haughtily.

“If this is an indignity, my lord, remember that the halter is a greater—and that even the facing a file of musketeers in your shroud is an honor not to be coveted: your escape is now the paramount consideration, for on that depends not only your own safety, but probably that of your daughter and niece, to say nothing of Father Ledra, who would, perhaps, scarcely come to harm in any event.”

“It is very true,” said the baron, “and I will follow your directions: but a word now on the subject of these children. Deeply as I regret that I encumbered myself with them on this journey, something must be done, if possible, for their safety and rescue. I had my views in transplanting Blanche to my western home, but of these it is unnecessary now to speak; with her illness on the voyage, her frequent sadness, and her singular sentiments, she has thus far been only a source of trouble to me—and now ——”

A look of surprise and scorn had gradually stolen over the face of the commander, who, at length, suddenly interrupted the other:

“Speak you of your daughter, my lord?” he said.

“I speak of my daughter, Captain Sill; and if time permitted, I might, perhaps, tell you why it is that she has so little of the spirit of a Montaigne, and possesses feelings so little congenial with mine.”

“Let us change this subject, my lord; I see in your daughter

only a being of unequalled beauty and grace, modest, reserved, and melancholy ; if she has demerits, let me not hear them, and least of all from you."

"As you please, Captain Sill : I am somewhat old to be reproved, either by word or look, in a matter of which I must necessarily be the most competent judge. But Blanche's present safety is probably sufficiently insured : ladies are not made prisoners of war, or if nominally so, are subject to no rigor ; and Father Ledra, who has both her and Emily in charge, will doubtless be able to provide a home for them, without disclosing their names or rank, until such time as I can provide for their rescue."

Montaigne turned away, and the commander gazed after him a moment in silence.

"Safety indeed !" he exclaimed, "and in the profligate court of Lord Cornbury ; it is the safety of the dove in the eagle's eyrie."

So saying, he proceeded to knock at the door of an inner cabin, and, in response to the bidding from within, opened it, and stood in the presence of the object of his solicitude.

Of Blanche Montaigne, a few words of description must for the present suffice. A little above the medium height of her sex, she was still of that delicate and graceful mould which gives somewhat of a *petite* appearance to the person. Although her features were singularly symmetrical and striking, her face and neck of an infantile delicacy of texture and hue, her hair redundant in rich glossy curls, and her eyes of the purest blue, her beauty consisted even less in these than in the sweet expression, which, while it illumined her whole countenance, might be said to dwell with more enduring permanence upon her lips. It is to these flexile features, indeed, ever silently depicting the emotions within, that the human face is chiefly indebted for its character as an index of the heart. Ever legible, whether for good or evil, they speak while the voice is silent, and while even the eye is in comparative repose. In Blanche, they told of all pure and gentle affections, of mirthfulness, modesty,

timidity, truth—yet of mingling sadness and disquiet now, which still seemed but a lingering cloud, bright itself with the effulgence it concealed.

The companion of Miss Montaigne was a lady of about thirty years, possessing little claim even to the remembrance of beauty, yet dressed with an elaborate care which manifested a disposition to eke out her slender stock of charms by adventitious aid. Her countenance was by no means repulsively homely; its parts, indeed, were separately good, yet they seemed, so to speak, ill-assorted, and lacking that harmony of proportion which appeals so powerfully to the eye, and compels the meed of admiration. Yet Emily Roselle, favored by that compensating principle which everywhere prevails, was in part remunerated for the want of a pleasing face by a fine figure, and a natural ease and grace of manner; and but for a slight deficiency of good sense and good nature, would have been not a little attractive.

A third person who was seated in the cabin when Captain Sill entered, and who had apparently been reading to the young ladies from a volume which lay open before him, was the individual spoken of by Montaigne as Father Ledra. He was a man of about sixty years, with an aspect singularly benign and pleasing; there was, indeed, no mistaking the genuine goodness which shone in every lineament of his face, and gleamed, like the light of truth, from his large grey eyes. Father Ledra was a Christian in the strongest sense of that significant word. His saintly reputation was well known to Captain Sill, who, after saluting him with marked deference, addressed himself to the younger lady, and briefly informed her of the means that were being taken for her father's safety.

“A few hours,” he continued, “and we shall at least be relieved from the perils of famine and shipwreck, and as to everything beyond, we must hope for the best.”

“Say, rather, we must trust to that same guiding hand which has

thus far preserved us," interposed the priest; "three days since we little dreamed of even this relief from the dangers which threatened us."

The commander bowed and continued, still addressing Miss Montaigne :

"Your father, deeply impressed with a sense of the importance to his sovereign of his personal safety, is engrossed with preparations for escape: he has, I believe, communicated to Father Ledra his plans in your behalf, or—or is about so to do."

It was an embarrassing position to stand as the apologist of a cold and selfish parent before a neglected child, and the mounting color on the cheek of Blanche told the mortification which she experienced at such a necessity.

"I do not know," she replied, hesitatingly; "everything, I believe, is left to the discretion of Father Ledra, and we are commended to his counsel and guidance."

"Uncle, in short, confides *us* to Providence and the priest," said Miss Roselle, "but seems to think something more is requisite for himself and the interests of France."

A look of reproach from Miss Montaigne interrupted her cousin, and if aught could be judged from the countenance of the latter, prevented a still severer invective. The commander hastened to take up the conversation, and having bestowed such advice and encouragement as seemed appropriate, withdrew to his more legitimate duties. The vessel, meanwhile, by the aid of such expedients as her dismantled state still afforded, was progressing on her sinuous route towards the city, which her thinned crew, wearied with unremitting labor, gazed gladly upon in the distance, heedless of its hostile character, and even of the prison homes which they had reason to expect.

CHAPTER II.

"The mighty monarch of the tribes that roam
A thousand forests, and on countless streams
Urge the swift bark, and dare the cataract's foam."—*Mrs. Sigourney.*

THE Baron Montaigne had long been a resident of French America. An impaired fortune had originally induced him to serve his sovereign in the New World, and long habit had rendered pleasing what his increased wealth no longer made necessary. About a year preceding his first arrival in Canada, and nearly sixteen years prior to the time now spoken of, he had been bereaved of his wife, an English lady of great merit, which, however, had failed of its appreciation at the hands of her haughty lord. His infant daughter, then scarcely three years of age, had been confided to the charge of a kind maternal aunt in England, with whom she had resided until the death of the latter, which occurred when Blanche had attained the age of eighteen. A peculiarity of disposition and a desire to shun society, which in his impoverished state imposed many mortifications upon his proud spirit, had tempted him into the very depths of the wilderness, where, by the liberality of his sovereign, he was enabled to erect a castle of no mean pretensions both to elegance and strength. The Indian warriors saw with surprise its turreted walls and frowning battlements arising amidst their forest solitudes, and marvelled deeply at the magnificence of their great father across the water, who could bestow such state and wealth even on his inferior nobles. The section of country thus selected for a residence by Montaigne was about a hundred and fifty miles southwest of Quebec, on the border of a stream which constitutes the outlet of Lake Champlain,

and in a vast and unsubdued wilderness, which rather divided the French and English territories than formed a distinct part of either. Boundary lines, indeed, were drawn with no accuracy in those early days, on a continent which was settled only on its edges, but at a later period they became the subject of much controversy. Wars, when waged, were rather for the sovereignty of the settlements and the nominal conquest of vast inland regions, of which little was known by either of the belligerent powers, excepting that they stretched over a given number of degrees of latitude and longitude. The Huron and Algonquin Indians had long been allies of the French, as the Five Nations were of the English; and so important did Louis consider their continued friendship to the welfare of his American dominions, that no pains were spared to cement the alliance. It was this purpose, and the additional hope of winning over the Iroquois to his allegiance, and thus paving the way for a complete conquest of New York, that had actuated the monarch in the endowment of Castle Montaigne, and the liberal support of its secluded lord. The baron, on his part, left no means untried to gain the full confidence and respect of the savages,—an object of no difficult attainment to a hardy soldier, who was capable of setting examples both of bravery and fortitude even to their veteran warriors.

The Hurons, who resided in the vicinity of Quebec, and on the banks of the Sorelle, were colonies of the principal nation of that name, whose home and hunting grounds were much further west; they had been transplanted early in the preceding century by the influence of their European allies, and had themselves grown into a considerable tribe, having one village near the French capital, and another in the immediate vicinity of Castle Montaigne, where their territorial possessions were extensive. The parent tribe were also in league with France, and paid willing fealty to King Louis, in the person of his valiant agent, who had spent many months among them, had given them many valued lessons in the art of war, and had led them to several victorious fields against their oppressive

neighbors of the west. So completely had he won the hearts of the bold savages, that they had formally elected him the principal chief of their nation, denominating him, in imitation of his own sovereign's title, a king, and enjoining upon their brethren nearer the seaboard also to recognise him as such,—a mandate which the junior tribe, equally impressed with his prowess, and proud of his alliance, zealously obeyed.

But it was not by martial prowess alone that the hearts of the Indians were always most effectually won: King Louis, at least, had reason to acknowledge the efficacy of a very different warfare in gaining their allegiance. The heralds of the Gospel were already scattered everywhere through the French settlements, and had penetrated in some instances to the most remote corners of the land. The cross had glistened at intervals along that whole vast circuit of waters which stretches from Quebec to the gulf of the Mississippi, and not one of its golden links of lake and river but had furnished the baptismal element for some dusky neophyte of the wilderness. Self-denying men, bound by holy vows, but more by untiring love and unfaltering faith, dared, aye, courted martyrdom in every shape, that they might gain souls to Christ. Of these, one or more were always stationed at the castle, where their time was devoted not only directly to their calling, but, accessory to the same general end, to the secular education of such of the Indian youth as could be induced to submit to the restraints of study. It was to join this spiritual cohort, as a resident missionary at the castle, that Father Ledra had crossed the ocean, patiently enduring privation, and softening by his unobtrusive piety the prejudices against his church, with which a Protestant education had imbued both Blanche and Emily.

Seventeen long years the baron had sojourned in his new home; long at least they seemed to the gentle girl, who had been taught her daily lesson of affection for an absent parent, and had spent a thousand hours of childish wonder and expectation, in view of that

great event, to which, from the first days of her remembered life, she had been taught to look forward—her father's return.

Montaigne had, meanwhile, contented himself with receiving annual letters from his sister-in-law, giving information of Blanche's welfare; his answers to which, always cold and formal, seldom contained any direct message to his daughter, even after she had attained years of discretion. The remembrance of some unforgiven wrong on the part of the mother seemed to hang for ever like a cloud between the baron and his child. It was not, indeed, without a degree of pleasure that he read in all Mrs. Roselle's letters accounts of Blanche's extraordinary beauty and grace, of her mild and gentle disposition, and of her well cultivated and well stored mind; but if, at times, he felt a longing to reclaim his child, the consciousness of circumstances which must humble himself in her estimation continually intervened, to chill and deaden all his better resolutions. Pride was his master passion, and its baleful glare fell with a withering effect upon all the gentler emotions of his nature. Beneath its congealing blight, a young and innocent wife had passed speedily from the altar to the tomb; and well had it been for Blanche that the unfolding wealth of her young affections had not been chilled and repressed by its cold commands or its still colder caresses.

The event to which allusion has been made, as one for which Montaigne dreaded his daughter's scorn, as he had long endured his own, related to his existing domestic establishment. A powerful Huron warrior had early sought his alliance, and a dowry of measureless acres had purchased the simulated affections of the baron for the trembling daughter of the chief. They were married after the savage mode, while the wily groom smiled at the simplicity of his allies, and recked lightly of the fetters which bound him to the Indian maid. She was not his wife, so thought the haughty noble, for no sacramental tie existed between them, no priest had sanctioned their union, no permission of Holy Church had made it valid. Little did these things weigh with the trusting wife, who

became to him a faithful and affectionate partner, watching and obeying in all things the faintest token of his will, and submitting to all the trappings of his imperious temper without a murmur. One gentle word, one kind smile, repaid her for every wrong, and formed a treasure for memory to resort to, during all the long intervals of coldness and neglect and scorn. Hers was, indeed, that perfect love of woman, which exists alike in every clime. The baron, conscious that rumors of his strange alliance must reach Quebec, and thence pass to France, took every occasion to deny its truth, and to censure the detractors who cast such obloquy upon his ancient family; but circumstances soon occurred which made it a more serious affair than he had anticipated. It became necessary to obtain the royal confirmation to the grant which had been made by the chief to his perfidious son-in-law, and Louis, who had received tidings of the whole affair, refused to confirm the deed until the marriage had been celebrated according to the rites of the church. He went, indeed, further than this, and threatened his distinguished subject with his displeasure and punishment if he refused to ratify the contract with his Indian spouse. No words can describe the anger and mortification of Montaigne at this unexpected result; and, in the privacy of his retirement, he denounced the aged king as a drivelling dotard, fit only to govern women and priests. But rage and remonstrance were alike unavailing to nullify the decree, and with the most galling sense of degradation he at length submitted to its requirements. In a chapel adjacent to the castle, the wedding was publicly solemnized, and an infant daughter of the bride, who shared with her mother the contempt of the baron, was at the same time admitted to the rite of baptism. The baroness, for such had now become her legitimate title, became thenceforth a personage of additional importance in the eyes of her dusky relations, and, it need scarcely be said, an object of renewed hatred to her husband. Nothing could atone to him for the wounded vanity of which she had been the guiltless cause; and all

her unobtrusive affection, all her silent watchings for tokens of returning kindness, were repaid with increased coldness and scorn. She was a cloud upon his heart, a blight upon his hopes, a barrier betwixt himself and that bright world from which he had long been immured, and to which he now felt that he never could return.

But many changes had taken place between that period and the point of time at which the present narrative opens. The little Myrtle, for such had been the baptismal name bestowed rather by the priest than the parent, had grown to be a miracle of forest beauty; and as the tendrils of the vine cling to the rock, so had her infantile graces gained a foothold in the crevices of the baron's stony heart. Despite his pride, his imagined wrongs, his tarnished name, he had loved his daughter; and the neglected mother, who had long despaired of any returning tenderness for herself, was still delighted to enjoy the reflected beams of kindness which fell upon her child. She exulted in Myrtle's beauty and grace, and watched every word and look of love bestowed upon her, with an avarice of affection that none but a mother's heart can parallel.

Years rolled by; and the baron, who had long been fully reinstated in his sovereign's confidence, had become so engrossed in the duties of his station, and in his growing wealth and power, that he scarcely remembered the existence of Blanche, excepting when perusing the letters from her aunt, or remitting the annual stipend for her support. Myrtle attained her sixteenth year, a slight, straight girl, with eyes and hair of unrelieved blackness, with long silken lashes, and cheeks in which the rose of Europe triumphed over the olive hue of the forest. She was, in short, a beautiful brunette, sportive as the fawn, and scarcely less agile.

It was at this period that events occurred which marked an epoch in the life of Montaigne, and which were productive of important results to all with whom he was immediately connected. Political movements relating to the colony required his presence in France, and the same arrival which brought his sovereign's summons for his

return, conveyed to him the intelligence of Mrs. Roselle's death, and of the homeless situation of Blanche. He repaired to Quebec, and while awaiting the sailing of the ship which was to convey him to Havre, sojourned with his friend, the aged Marquis Vaudreuil, who was then viceroy of New France, and to whose exalted post, when it should become vacant, the baron expected promotion. Here he became acquainted with a nephew of the governor, one Count Carlton, a young man of prepossessing person and manners, of whom the marquis spoke in terms of the warmest eulogy. Rank, wealth, wit, valor, and every accomplishment, if the governor's word was to be taken, belonged to this extraordinary man, who had fled from the gaieties of Parisian life to seek excitement and adventure in the new world. Himself deceived, Vaudreuil little dreamed how erroneous a portraiture he had drawn of his nephew, who was, in fact, a mere adventurer, bankrupt in purse and reputation, and totally devoid of principle. He had recently arrived in the colony, and by the profoundest dissimulation had gained the good graces of his uncle, which he hoped by some means to transmute into the current coin of the realm. Montaigne's great wealth and political importance of course made him also a desirable acquaintance for the scheming youth; and, long fasting from the adulation and deference which his exorbitant vanity craved, he became a ready dupe to the specious flatteries of the count. If he had up to this period hesitated about bringing home Blanche on his return from France, he no longer did so. Here, he argued to himself, was a ready way of disposing of her in marriage, and at once relieving his mind of its responsibility in her behalf. So strongly did this idea take possession of his mind, that, on parting with his friends, he repeated an invitation which he had already extended to Carlton, to visit Castle Montaigne after his own return from Europe; and added, in a jocular way, that he had a marriageable daughter, and if the young people should chance to fancy each other, he would not object to the alliance. The marquis bowed coldly at this remark, which he sus-

pected to be more than jest, for, knowing nothing of Blanche, he supposed it to allude to Myrtle, and he thought it a poor compliment to a gallant for whom half the belles of Paris were pining, to be offered the hand of a half Huron maid, and who was even legitimate only by the royal grace. But it was in the moment of departure, and Montaigne did not dream of the erroneous construction which was put upon his language. If, however, the Marquis Vaudreuil derided the proposal of his friend, it was not so with Carlton, who, while seeming to outdo his uncle in making sport of the affair, secretly resolved to visit Castle Montaigne during the absence of its lord, and acquaint himself with the Indian heiress.

The baron reached Paris in safety, and thence, while awaiting the tardy action of the French cabinet, despatched a letter to England, whither he could not safely proceed in person, summoning his daughter to meet him, by an appointed day, at the neutral port of Ostend, and notifying her of his intentions in regard to her change of abode. Although the stiff and frigid sentences in which this intelligence was conveyed were almost sufficient to repress the filial promptings of her heart, Blanche was still delighted at the news; for her home, since the death of her aunt, had been of the most comfortless description, and she was prepared to welcome any change which gave promise of relief. She was authorized to procure a maid, or companion, if practicable; and this privilege resulted in the selection of her cousin Emily, less from any congeniality of feeling between them, than from a sense of duty to the nearly destitute daughter of her deceased aunt. Miss Roselle gladly accepted the proposal, for she possessed the most romantic views of life, despite the dull realities to which her experience had been confined, and the new world seemed to her only a field for the exploits of chivalry, and the triumphs of distressed beauty. She was of good family, and her lineal claim to gentility was a subject on which her friends were seldom left unenlightened. That these advantages would be of vast importance in her new home she did not allow herself to doubt, and

as all the family finery had devolved upon her, she was able, notwithstanding her poverty, to fortify her pretensions by a display of dress and ornament often more gaudy than becoming.

A week sufficed for the needful preparations, and when everything was in readiness the ladies proceeded to a neighboring seaport, and took passage for Ostend, where they arrived prior to the appointed day, and awaited the coming of their distinguished relative. He did not prove unpunctual; and although his arrival was with that ceremony of equipage and attendants which might be supposed gratifying to a young lady, Blanche's mind was engrossed by emotions which left little room for vanity. The interview was singularly awkward and embarrassing; and the frightened daughter, after several ineffectual attempts to break through the air of stateliness and reserve which encompassed her parent, submitted at length silently to its influence. Time, she thought, would work a change, and nature yet re-assert its power in her father's breast. Visions of artless devices, by which she would win his attention and regard, passed rapidly through her mind, and she looked forward with joy to the anticipated light of affection which was yet to beam upon her long desolate heart. But, as there had been no pretence of consulting her wishes in relation to the proposed change in her life, the timid girl scarcely felt at liberty to give expression to her feelings, and the father saw in her silence only signs of moroseness and dissatisfaction.

The party set out at once for Paris, where they arrived in a few days, and where Miss Roselle fully expected to be snatched up by some ardent admirer before the baron was ready to resume his journey. This event not occurring, they proceeded, after about a month's delay, to Havre, and, in company with the missionary priest, Father Ledra, embarked in the doomed *St. Cloud*, for Quebec. Of the wreck and suffering which forced that ill-fated vessel to seek shelter in an enemy's port, the reader is already aware.

CHAPTER III.

“Torn spars and sails, her cargo in the deep,
The ship draws near with slow and laboring sweep.”—*Dana*.

It was quite too bad to leave the crippled brig tossing upon the tempestuous waves of the bay of New York during so long a retrospective chapter; but it all comes of beginning a story at the wrong end, or rather, of beginning it in the middle,—a plan which, although it has classic precept and example for its authority, remains of doubtful utility. As the vessel had approached the harbor, the fears of Miss Montaigne had rapidly increased. She knew enough of the peculiar attitude in which her father stood in relation to the English colonies, as the ally of the northern Indians, and the supposed instigator of many of their atrocities, to understand that his life was now in extreme peril; and notwithstanding his unreserved selfishness, she felt the utmost solicitude for his escape. Captain Sill assembled his officers and crew, and imposed upon them the strictest secrecy in relation to the distinguished passenger who now stood among them as one of their number, and the baron strengthened the appeal by a handsome gratuity to the men. The young ladies were to pass as sisters, bearing the name of Roselle, who were travelling in charge of Father Ledra to their friends in Canada, a fiction diverging at so slight an angle from the truth, that the priest, although he would by no means consent to assert, agreed not to contradict it.

The piers of the city, meanwhile, had become populous with an eager crowd, watching the approach of the vessel, and speculating with every variety of opinion upon the extraordinary event. Not a

few were peering eagerly down the bay in search of the remainder of the fleet, which they fully believed was about to make its appearance in a hostile attitude; and a classic old Dutchman, who had not been at the university of Gottingen for nothing, talked mysteriously about the Grecian horse, fatal to trusting Troy, and doubted, between some most ominous whiffs of his pipe, whether the St. Cloud were a wrecked vessel at all. It was an easy matter, he said, to cut down masts and break away bulkheads, and come rolling sideways into port in a storm, and yet have a thousand armed soldiers stowed away in the hold, after all. Not that *he* cared much whether Louis or Queen Anne held a city to which neither of them had any right, but the destruction of life and property, he said; glancing at a six-sided store-house of his own upon the wharf, was a thing not to be disregarded. A number of listeners turned pale at these remarks, and some suggested calling out the militia and the fire-engines for the defence of the city; while others thought the guns of the fort ought to be fired into the wreck, without delay, by way of ascertaining the truth of the suspicions. But, as the troops from the fort at this moment made their appearance, having been ordered out to keep the peace and prevent the escape of the prisoners, it was considered safe to quietly await the *dénouement*, the more prudent retiring a little into the back-ground.

Governor Cornbury, in the meantime, with several members of his council, prepared to pay an official visit to the strangers. He exulted at the accident, because the vessel and its stores would prove a valuable acquisition to the colony and to his private purse; but he had no intention of detracting from these advantages, by burdening the government with the expense of maintaining a large number of prisoners of war. The unfortunate captain, having dropped anchor at a little distance from shore, received his visitors upon his quarter-deck with great urbanity, and tendering his sword to the governor, formally surrendered his ship; while Cornbury, equalling the Frenchman in politeness, courteously declined accepting his

weapon, and at once admitted the officers to their parole. He next requested that the crew should be assembled amidships, and having expressed his sympathy for the hardships they had already undergone, signified that they were to be unconditionally released, a seeming magnanimity which was responded to with hearty cheers. He had addressed the men in French, but with the commander, who spoke English fluently, he conversed in that language, and turning to him now, inquired if he had any passengers.

"We have a few non-combatants in the cabin," responded Sill, smiling, "a priest, and two young ladies who are travelling in his charge; it will be hardly necessary to invoke your excellency's clemency in their behalf."

"Our laws," returned the governor, more gravely, "impose the penalty of death upon any Romish priest who shall voluntarily enter the province, and the most that we can do in your friend's behalf will be to allow him thirty days to depart. As to the ladies, they are allowed the largest liberty under all circumstances. I had almost hoped," he continued, "that your accident might afford me the pleasure of an introduction to some of the officers of His Majesty's colonial government; there are pending differences between us which such an interview might go far to arrange: have I your word of honor that there is no such individual in your ship?"

"My lord," replied Sill, slightly coloring, and glancing at the crew, who remained amidships watching the interview, while the baron's figure towered conspicuously among them, "my lord, the individuals now before you, and the three passengers below, are the only persons on board my ship—for this you have my word of honor; if you still doubt——"

"I doubt nothing that Captain Sill asserts," answered the governor, whose suspicions were aroused by the embarrassed air of the other; "but there is something that looks like mystery here; let me see this priest of whom you speak; I much fear his ordination has not been strictly canonical. Clerical robes have been used as

disguises before now, and if your friend does not belong to the true succession, Mother Church will, doubtless, thank me for unmasking him."

"You will scarcely doubt Father Ledra after you have seen him," said Sill, motioning to an officer to call up the passengers; "I wish the church had no representatives whose sanctity is more questionable."

A few moments' pause ensued, during which the eyes of the governor wandered among the crew, and seemed to fix inquiringly upon the prominent figure of the baron; but a rustling in the cabin gangway, and the appearance of the priest, accompanied by the ladies, at once recalled his attention. Miss Montaigne was closely veiled, and hung tremblingly upon the arm of Father Ledra; while Emily, unalarmed and unveiled, walked boldly at her cousin's side, and seemed bent on setting her friend a pattern of courage, if not of modesty. The evident interest excited by the approach of the ladies justified the sagacity of the commandant, who had summoned them to accompany the priest on deck with a view to a diversion of Lord Cornbury's somewhat dangerous attack.

"Captain Sill has much misconceived my meaning," said the governor, politely removing his hat, "if he understood me as requiring the attendance of the ladies on deck; let them return if they choose, or let them at least be seated."

"My sister is much frightened," answered Miss Roselle, hastily, and glancing at Blanche, "and is afraid to quit the side of her protector; we must be excused, therefore, for coming into your presence unbidden."

"I am much beholden to Miss Roselle's fears since they procure me the honor of this interview," returned Lord Cornbury, bowing formally to the speaker, but scarcely removing his eyes from the slight and graceful figure of her companion; "and yet," he continued, smiling, "it devolves a somewhat unpleasant duty upon me: the commissions of his Most Christian Majesty rest at times upon

very diminutive shoulders, and a veil, excuse me, might possibly hide a moustache. Your sister, if such she be, will doubtless favor us with a view of her face."

"Which will at least be *primâ facie* evidence in her behalf," interposed a punning notary, who was in attendance in his official capacity.

Emily whispered a moment to Blanche, who, sinking into a seat which had been placed for her, drew aside her veil with trembling hand, revealing, by the act, charms which seemed like a gleam of sunlight to the beholders. Miss Montaigne's beauty was of that perfect order which admits of no cavil, even from the lips of envy or rivalry; it impressed the eye with a whelming sense of loveliness, both in feature and expression, and seemed, as it was, the reflection of a gentle and unsullied heart. Pale with agitation, her eyes rested upon the deck, and it was not until some moments that Cornbury, startled at the pleasing vision, recovered his self-possession.

"Here is no soldier, certainly," he said, gaily, "unless it may be a field officer of Cupid; my inquisition is at an end in this quarter, and I can only beg pardon of Miss Roselle for having given her such evident pain. The ladies will consider themselves entirely at liberty."

The governor had been surprised at the facility with which Emily conversed in the English language, and on seeking an explanation from that lady, was informed that both she and her sister were educated in England, and were, on the maternal side, of English descent. The captain's familiarity with the same tongue was less a matter of marvel, his profession being one which rendered such an acquirement almost indispensable. But Father Ledra, though learned in the ancient tongues, conversed only in French, and Cornbury was compelled to address him in that dialect; but a very brief conversation convinced the governor that his suspicions were groundless, and he even declined the proffered inspection of the lug-

gage of the ecclesiastic, an inventory of which would have revealed little else than books of devotion and instruments of penance.

"I am indeed a soldier," he said, when the governor's suspicions were explained to him, raising his mild eyes upwards, while his white locks fell like snow upon his shoulders; "I am indeed a soldier, but it is of the cross of Christ; my warfare is with spiritual evil, and my coat of mail," pressing his hands upon his breast, "is one that inflicts wounds, but does not ward them."

Lord Cornbury was satisfied with his inquiries, and would have been contented to withdraw at this stage of the affair, leaving the vessel in charge of the proper governmental officer; but another and more dangerous inquisition had unfortunately been going on for some minutes previous, in a different part of the vessel. Mr. Attorney Nabb, the notary, of whom mention has been made, was one of those little, restless, waspish men, who are never content to act in a subordinate capacity; and after chafing for some time under his forced restraint, he had slipped out of the shadow of his superiors, for the purpose of acting the little great man in another quarter. His field of operation was amidships, where he blustered around among the crew for some time, with no well defined aim beyond that of impressing the sailors with a sense of his importance; but after much peering about, and many wise looks, he came suddenly to a stand in front of Montaigne, and remained looking up at the portly figure before him with a singular air of admiration and contempt. The disproportion of physical power between the two, which was ludicrously great, perhaps suggested to the pigmy the idea of displaying a little official authority, by way of balancing accounts.

"Who are you?" he said, addressing the supposed sailor in French.

"Jack Beans, if it please your honor," said the baron, twirling his cap, with an admirable appearance of embarrassment.

Nabb pulled out a pencil from his pocket, and noted down the answer with great gravity; an action which, of course, attracted the

general attention of the crew, as the attorney well knew it would, and when he next threw back his head for the purpose of putting another question, he had the satisfaction of seeing that Mr. Jack Beans seemed a little alarmed. Several interrogatories succeeded in regard to the age, residence, and occupation of the supposed sailor, all of which were carefully written down, and the practised eye of the attorney could not fail to perceive at each additional inquiry renewed tokens of apprehension. Satisfied, however, at length, with having frightened the giant and displayed his own importance, he was about turning away, when his eye was arrested by the edge of a fine linen wristband protruding from beneath the coarse flannel sleeve of the sailor's shirt. Startled at the sight, suspicion at once took possession of his mind, and several minute circumstances to which he had before paid little heed, gave it confirmation. Stepping a few paces backward, to gain a better view of the Frenchman's head, he noticed the soft and silky appearance of the hair, and the fine face and neck, which gave no evidence of exposure to the sun; while Montaigne, in the effort to avoid quailing, had inadvertently resumed his usual air of authority, and met the gaze of the other with the look of a chained eagle. Convinced that he had stumbled upon a prize of some kind, the attorney's delight knew no bounds; he continued complacently gazing upon his victim for some moments, running over in his mind the probable magnitude of the service which he was about to render to government, and the extent of his reward. He must be, thought Nabb, an officer of the army at least, and possibly a nobleman; it might even be the Marquis Vaudreuil, or one of the royal family, or, for soaring fancy seldom stops midway in her flight, the very majesty of France himself. Gloating over his discovery, he reached upwards, and tapping Montaigne upon the shoulder, said:

“Lord Cornbury has released the *crew* of the *St. Cloud*, but not any officer or gentleman who sees fit to assume a seaman's dress: Monsieur will please to consider himself under arrest.”

So saying, he turned away to inform the governor of his discovery, but had scarcely communicated his information, before a slight commotion was perceived amidships, and three figures bounded over the gunwale, and descended the vessel's side. The boat by which the governor and his suite had approached the ship was waiting at the foot of the man-ropes, the waterman in whose charge it had been left having been attracted by curiosity on board the vessel. A moment of consternation prevailed, and the attorney, furious with the fear of losing his prize, seemed altogether demented: shouting, "an escape! stop him! stop him!" he flew rather than ran towards the place where the baron had disappeared, and calling loudly for the "*posse comitatus*" to follow, he leaped upon the gunwale. The last of the fugitives was at that moment entering the skiff, and Nabb, gliding down the ropes like a squirrel, pitched into the boat, just as they had succeeded in casting her loose. Recovering his feet, he darted to the side of the stalwart baron, and grasping him by the arm, exclaimed, "I arrest you in the Queen's name!" but Montaigne, seating himself without reply, drew the little man forcibly to his lap, and shouted,

"Pull now for your lives! a thousand pounds if we escape!"

The whole scene up to this point had occupied scarcely thirty seconds, and the tumult and excitement on deck were still too great to admit of any deliberate action. Blanche had swooned, Miss Roselle was in hysterics, and Captain Sill, fearful of an outbreak among his crew, was calling loudly to them to remain quiet. Lord Cornbury himself was far from being self-possessed, and, gesticulating with his sword, he called to the commander of the troops on the adjacent wharf, and ordered him to fire a volley into the boat—a command which was about being executed, when a shriek of agony from the skiff arrested general attention.

"For Heaven's sake don't let them fire, my lord," exclaimed one of Cornbury's companions, "it will be certain death to Mr. Nabb."

All eyes were turned towards the skiff, where the prominent

figure of Montaigne, seated, facing the shore, and holding the struggling attorney before him, like a shield, was plainly visible. He was near the stern of the vessel, thus at the same time protecting the two sailors, who were bending meanwhile lustily to their oars, while the little bark was making such headway as the heavy billows would allow. It was a critical moment; the troops had taken aim, and the order to fire was trembling on the lips of their officer, when a reluctant countermand from the governor brought down their guns. Boats were next in requisition for the chase, but the advantage of the start, and the desperate vigor of the fugitives, left little to fear from the pursuit of oars alone, and before a sail-boat could be procured and got under weigh they were well out from the land. Sagaciously taking a route nearly in the wind's eye, they had the satisfaction of seeing the last-named vessel compelled to describe an arc of an immense circle, before she could even begin to bear down upon them. The baron, in the meantime, took his turn at the oars, and even compelled the notary to duty in the same line, under penalty of being left behind. Frequent changes at this labor, with stout hearts and strong arms, worked wonders, and in less than twenty minutes, notwithstanding the roughness of the water, they reached the Jersey shore, while their pursuers were yet more than a mile distant. Nabb had grown much terrified in contemplating the probable disposition which was to be made of himself after he had ceased to be serviceable; and his alarm was not abated on landing, by hearing some cool inquiries made by the sailors of their principal, as to the manner in which he should be dispatched. But Montaigne entertained no such design, and reminding the notary that he was a prisoner of war, released him on his parole of honor not to aid or assist, by information or otherwise, in the pursuit. Impressed with the importance of retaining his skiff, the baron caused it to be skilfully concealed in a ravine in the woods, and then, with the sailors, plunged into the thicknesses of the forest to await the approach of

night. The pursuing party came up some thirty minutes subsequently, only to find the half-exhausted attorney alone upon the beach. Still impetuous in the chase, they plied him with a dozen questions at once, as to the course of the fugitives and the disposition made of the boat; but Nabb rigidly preserved his parole. If ridiculous and conceited at times, he was not wanting in honor as he had proved himself not deficient in courage. The pursuers, therefore, after much ineffectual search, returned to the city, contenting themselves with the belief that the Frenchmen would be starved in the wilderness, or be murdered by the Indians.

Lord Cornbury was much chagrined at the affair, and the more so when he had succeeded in extorting from the fears of some of the crew the name and rank of the fugitive. That he had had so coveted a prize within his very grasp, and yet had suffered him to escape, was a most galling reflection. Rage for a while became dominant in his breast, and he had nearly resolved on a revocation of his clemency towards the remaining prisoners; but reflection induced him to follow out the line of policy which he had before adopted. They were all set at liberty on the terms which have already been named, and Father Ledra was allowed ample time to quit the province. The governor, for a while, lost sight of the minor incidents connected with the affair in the attempt at regaining the baron, an object for the accomplishment of which, by proclamation and pursuit, he left no means untried. Troops were sent up the river, and Indians through the forest; and extra posts and runners were flying in every direction, proclaiming the escape and the princely reward of re-capture. That the lion was in the jungle somewhere between New York and Albany, there could be little doubt; and so confident were the anticipations of his being taken, that the council in New York several times debated the subject of his doom. But the vigilance and valor which had planned so extraordinary an escape were not easily to be circumvented. A protracted journey,

prolific in incidents of peril and suffering, was terminated by his safe arrival at Castle Montaigne, an event to which others of great moment were subsequently linked, as the diligent reader of the following pages will discover.

CHAPTER IV.

“Quaint old town of toil and traffic, quaint old
town of art and song ;
Memories haunt thy pointed gables, like the rooks
that round them throng.”—*Longfellow.*

JACOBUS WALDRON was a Dutchman ingrain. He was born somewhere near the centre of Holland proper, out of the range of all foreign atmospheric influences, and of parents, whose lineage, traceable for centuries, was of unadulterated Dutch. He spoke, wrote, read, thought, and dreamed in Dutch, wore Dutch garments with a Dutch air, and ate, and drank, and smoked, and slept after the most approved fashion of his race. It had been with many misgivings that he had migrated, when yet a young man, to New York, which at that time was a colony of Holland, but which, by some strange diplomatic process that he did not understand, was soon afterwards passed over to the sovereignty of England. Like some huge flapjack, tossed by the skilful housewife into the air, and ever coming down in a reversed position, such, to Jacobus's seeming, had been the political tumblings of the infant state, which had already belonged twice to both Holland and England, had been now taken on the sly and now by force, and had finally been transferred with the dash of a pen to the last named government, in company with some ignominious islands in the West Indies and the South Seas. It was a galling reflection to Mynheer Waldron that his native land had thus expatriated, as it were, thousands of her loving sons, who had thought, even at this distance, to nestle safely

down under her maternal wings. But he had brought with him all his worldly means, one half of which consisted of small yellow bricks, with shingles, shutters, and weathercocks, which were destined to grow into a house in the new world, and which had taken a thousand fantastic shapes in his imagination, as he smoked, and pondered, and dreamed through a three months' voyage from Amsterdam. He had brought with him, too, a plump little wife and a still plumper baby, crowing as yet, although of a sex which might more appropriately have cackled. And thus it was that Jacobus continued a denizen of New York, notwithstanding its excision from Holland, the news of which cruel act reached him just as he had completed his house, a building of many angles, which looked as old on the day when it was finished as it did a century subsequent, and on the very steep and smooth roof of which no bird, not remarkably sure-footed, would have dared to alight. He shut himself up for a while in his castle in great consternation, not knowing what amount of personal calamity to apprehend; but finding himself unmolested, he gradually took heart, and commenced timidly cultivating his land, of which he had several acres; and, finally, growing more and more daring, ventured to smoke his pipe on his front stoop, in the face of the whole city. As time rolled by, Jacobus was delighted to find that he remained undisturbed, and that his little farm, stocked with some genuine Dutch cattle, and a few negro slaves, who were then a cheap commodity in the province, afforded him a very comfortable subsistence. If there was no lack, however so neither was there any overplus; for his negroes, unfortunately, were all provided with mouths, and even his children, as they came successively to light, proved to be similarly equipped; so that, in one way and another, his yearly products vanished as fast as they came. He had many schemes for growing rich, none of which, however, ever came to sufficient maturity in his mind to be acted upon; but he kept hoping for better times, and fully believing that something or other would turn up, by and by, greatly to his advan-

tage. That indefinite something was doubtless the very same thing which has been about to happen to thousands ever since, who have lacked energy to overcome the natural *vis inertiae* of both mind and body, and who, practising neither self-denial nor industry, look confidently for the rewards of both. Whatever it was, it did not come to Jacobus. The course of nature was not subverted for his benefit. He did not grow rich, though he grew fat; for as years increased upon him, he worked less, and schemed more. Eighteen summers rolled by, and he was startled, one fine afternoon, on rubbing the smoke out of his eyes, and calling his little Hetty to his side, to find that she had really grown to be a young woman, and not a little handsome withal. It was strange that he had never noticed this transformation before; for whatever his daughter might have seemed to others, to him she had always been the same little toddler, who used to dance among the cabbages at the age of three, beguiling him by the hour from his little relished labor, and even knocking down, at times, the underpinning of those airy structures which he so much delighted to build. But now she herself became the subject of a scheme, suddenly conceived, but long revolved, as she stood at his side, the patient recipient of many puffs, not such as beauty covets most. Jacobus gazed into her pretty face, and smoothed her glossy hair, and eyed her neat round figure and her dimpled little hand, and thought of the rich young Vanderknipper in the neighborhood, who, everybody said, was in search of a wife. True, he was a booby, and as surly as a mastiff, but he owned half the street in which he resided, and many a fine block besides, his father having recently abdicated in his favor, and gone to a world where real estate is unknown. It was with much embarrassment that Mynheer Waldron succeeded in broaching the delicate subject, for the idea of matrimony, he doubted not, would overwhelm the poor child with alarm. He proved to be somewhat abroad in his calculations, as usual: matrimony, in the abstract, was not an object of aversion to Hetty; but she would by no means consent to become

Mrs. Vanderknipper. She cared little for blocks, and less for block-heads, and, besides that, she had other views; not that she said to her papa what she thus saucily thought, with the demurest and seemingly most submissive of faces. Argument and reason were unavailing, and Jacobus, pondering deeply, began to wonder whether the weekly visits of a young English merchant, who brought over his newspaper regularly for the father to read, while he chatted by the hour with Hetty, had anything at all to do with the matter. It could not be; for Mr. Huntington, although an enterprising, active young man, was as poor as himself; and as neither party could make any money by the operation, it did not seem at all probable that the merchant should seek an alliance with his daughter. Once more, Mynheer Waldron was in error; Huntington loved Hetty, and married her, before the father well knew whether he had given his consent or not; and Time, whom no events can retard, passed on with all its myriad dramas, for another period of twenty years, at which epoch his great kaleidoscope, being thoroughly shaken up, presented objects in a very different aspect. Jacobus was still alive, verging on eighty, as poor as ever, and still looking confidently for some favorable change in his affairs. Huntington's business had prospered famously for a while, for he was a dealer in furs, a magical sort of trade, at which all parties were gainers, except the producers of the raw material, who were cheated quite out of their skins. He grew rich, indeed, till even the lout of a Vanderknipper took off his hat to him; and then something jogged the rolling world, and a heavy cargo of peltry, bound to China, sank, uninsured, in the Pacific. Huntington took to his bed, and passed thence to the churchyard; and Hetty pined but a year, before she slept at his side, showing that life and wealth are only other names for bubbles and shadows. But they had not lived in vain. A son, of manly beauty, of graceful but athletic figure, of open and engaging countenance, perpetuated his father's worth and his mother's gentleness. At the age of nineteen, he had been called home from a foreign

university by intelligence of his first calamity, only in time to receive the coveted caresses of his remaining parent, and to follow her, destitute, and an orphan, to the grave. Some hearts are schooled, gradually, to grief, and grow familiar with its returning visage ; but Henrich's first draught of sorrow was from the lees. He mourned as none but the ingenuous and noble-hearted can mourn ; and when to others' seeming least mindful of his bereavement, his whole heart was often flooded with the gushing tenderness inspired by some sudden recollection of his loss. Mementoes were all around him, hourly touching some mystic thread of memory, and summoning, from her haunted caverns, the apparitions of departed bliss. Ah ! little do they think, whose experience of adversity has been confined to the common buffetings of fortune, of that greater calamity, which, taking one treasure, leaves all others valueless ! To lose a friend, and feel that there can be no return, not even for one short hour, through all the coming months, and seasons, and years of life, no word, no glance, no token of forgiven wrong, of continued love, of hoped re-union ; to know this dreadful truth, to feel it pressing heavily upon a heart yet unused to its vacancy, this is misery indeed, and it was that of Henrich.

But Heaven has graciously implanted in the mind, as in the body, those recuperative energies, which enable it to rise at length, buoyant, from the severest lacerations. The young Huntington became one of his grandfather's household, although, fortunately for both, not without a remnant of means which saved him from dependence. He possessed a taste for study and added largely, in private, to that broad superstructure of learning which had been already founded in his mind ; and when a few summers had passed away, there were but slight traces of his affliction discernible in his deportment. He had become happy and hopeful ; his laughter was again heard by welcoming ears ; his step was light and agile ; and his whole frame animated with the returning elasticity of youth. Still determining and still hesitating to enter in some way upon the active

duties of life, he yet clung to his books and his amusements with an indecision that he resolved should soon terminate. He would attempt something; he would not be an idler in the busy world around him; disconnected with its sympathies and hopeless of its rewards. Yet his were not the common illusions of youth, presenting the personal aggrandizement resulting from wealth or fame as the ultimate end of life. Taught in the school of affliction, he felt that there was something nobler and less selfish in existence than this; and that the glorious universe, of which he was a conscious part, was something more than a theatre for mere personal display, however brilliant might be the ephemeral gifts of man. The silent exemplars of ancient virtue, visible in colossal though indistinct proportions upon the classic page, and the more direct teachings of that high and holy philosophy, before which the light of mere human learning "pales its ineffectual ray," had given to his character that moral prominence which alone truly exalts humanity; and which, when wedded to intellect, becomes, like the blended light and heat of day, both brilliant and benign.

It was at this period of his life that an event occurred, which, though singular in itself, deserves chronicling, only by reason of its sequences, at an after day. Fond of hardy sports, and skilful as a marksman, the forests were his frequent resort when oppressed with the weariness of study; and on a fine June afternoon, he had sauntered, gun in hand, to the woods, unaccompanied save by the bright memories and brighter hopes that spring spontaneous in the breast of youth. There was a point, a little north of the wall, where a high sandy embankment overlooked the city, the confluent rivers, the bay and its islands, and the opposing shores, which stretched away in the distance, and converged in a hazy line around the shining waters, till but a narrow vista hinted of the unrevealed beauties beyond. It was a spectacle of rare beauty, and Henrich lingered long to gaze upon it, and to watch the shifting shadows that played upon the bay and beach, as the gauzy clouds sailed lazily across the bright

blue sky. The town reposed quietly before him, sending up no busy hum to his ear. The shouts of children in the streets, driving the bounding ball, or watching the diving kite; the sound of the woodman's axe and its quick echo; the rattling of an occasional wagon; the laughter of trafficking men; the song of the light-hearted negro;—these were the city's blended voices. The gleam of the sentinel's bayonet came from the distant fort as he paced his idle round; the unlifted flag was seen drooping from its staff; and, frowning from their embrasures, the threatening cannon looked out towards the sea.

Beyond this hill, over which the "ploughshare of ruin" has long since been driven, was a thicket or dense portion of the forest, remarkable for its profuse foliage and the unrelieved depth of its shade. It was of considerable extent, and included a ravine, at the bottom of which a sullen streamlet proved an attraction to the game, and consequently to the sportsman also. He had not proceeded far in this direction, when he perceived signs of what seemed at first a mortal contest between two athletic men; but a nearer advance and a closer scrutiny showed him that one only of the combatants was a human being, who was wrestling at vastly unequal odds with a huge gaunt wolf. Unusual as was this circumstance, it being well known that these animals seldom singly attack a man, unless impelled by the fiercest goadings of famine, the combat was of the most violent kind, and gave promise of a speedy termination. Appalled at the imminent peril which threatened a fellow-being, Henrich hastened to the spot, and for some time strove in vain to make himself a party to the conflict. So closely was the man locked in the fearful embrace of the beast, and so rapid were their gyrations, that any attempt to dispatch the latter with his weapon, might have proved equally fatal to the other. For a few seconds he darted around the parties, from side to side, seeking vainly for a safe opportunity to discharge his rifle with effect; and then, impelled by the increasing peril of the stranger, he threw his gun on the

ground, and with open arms rushed into the mêlée. The fierce flashing eyes of the wolf, his ensanguined jaws and teeth, as he turned snarlingly for a moment towards the new comer, were not calculated to inspire courage in his breast; but determined not to abandon a fellow mortal in such extremity, Henrich grasped the infuriated beast by the neck, and throwing himself heavily upon him succeeded in disengaging him from the wounded man. The latter, staggering backwards for a moment, rallied, and raising a club was about to renew the war, when the animal, alarmed at the reinforcement of his foe, commenced a growling retreat. It proved, however, a less masterly and less successful performance than some feats of this class which are on record; for Huntington, coolly recovering his weapon, called upon the rescued man to stand aside, who was still menacingly brandishing his club, and making a feint of pursuit. A quick aim and a detonation that was mingled with a short, fierce yell of the wolf, as he rolled on the ground, ended the affair; and for the first time Henrich had an opportunity to gratify his curiosity by looking at his companion. He was a rough, sun-burnt man of about forty years, clad in a sailor's dress, and with a countenance which must have been singularly forbidding in any aspect, but which at the present moment was almost fiendish in its expression. Seamed with scratches, stained with blood, lighted with eyes that still flashed rage, his face scarcely needed the coarse, disordered hair, and matted *moustache* which environed it, to seem altogether diabolical; and when Henrich, suppressing his emotions of horror, sympathizingly inquired the extent of his injuries, the harsh, grating reply of the other was in singular unison with his looks.

"The foul fiend seize him!" he said, glancing at the insensate carcase; "I was asleep upon the ground, or he never would have dared to attack me; and as for you, young man, I suppose you think you have saved my life!"

Henrich smiled, and was about to reply, when the other continued:

“But in that you are quite mistaken ; if you had let us alone, I should have done well enough ; I don’t need help against one wolf, and not much against a whole pack ; however, you meant well enough, Henrich Huntington, and for such a milk-soppish looking fellow, *did* well enough, too ; only, next time, I’ll thank you not to interfere—that’s all !” and so saying, the man picked up his crushed cap, shook the dust from it, and thrusting it on his head, marched off without further comment.

The young man gazed after him with an air of utter surprise, nor did he withdraw his eyes until the other had entirely disappeared in the depths of the forest. Then smiling, as he proceeded to reload his gun, he said :

“I killed the wrong wolf that time, certainly, and should have received more thanks if I had helped the other side. Who can the savage be ? and how does he know my name ?”

Thus soliloquizing, Henrich, after loading and priming his piece, proceeded to examine the body of the slain animal, which was of a size and species unusual in that region, and one from a personal encounter with which the bravest might well have shrunk. His bold attack, however, was very remarkable, and rendered probable the truth of the stranger’s assertion, that it had been made while he was asleep, and, doubtless, in the opinion of his assailant, already defunct.

The young man, after examining the body a few minutes, was about to turn away, when he heard a light bounding step breaking through the underbrush, and a young Indian hunter stood at his side. Uttering a quick guttural sound, that would hardly have been recognised as a laugh, excepting by one familiar with Indian modes of expression, the savage looked deferentially at Huntington, and then pointing at the game, said :

“Old long-ears ; me shoot him twice last year ; no use—see !” and turning the carcase over, he pointed out two scars upon the animal’s chest, which were evidently the traces of severe wounds.

Continuing his examination, he again uttered a chuckle of delight, and taking his knife from his belt, moved it dexterously for a few moments about the shoulder of the beast, and produced a leaden bullet, which he held up exultingly to Henrich.

“Mine!” he said; “my wolf! What does my brother say?”

“Say?” replied Henrich; “why, I say that you have proved title very clearly; and if you want the head—there it is; help yourself, Winny! The bounty will find you in powder for a month.”

Nodding good-naturedly to the young man, the Indian quickly severed the head, and seizing it by the ears, started on a run towards the city, to claim the small bounty which was then paid for slaughtering beasts of prey. Henrich, meanwhile, abandoning his proposed sport, returned slowly homeward, musing upon the singular events of the day.

CHAPTER V.

"She never wanted a good word—
From those who spoke her praise."—*Goldsmith.*

MRS. SNIFF was a slender little widow, of active tongue, whose dear departed had grown enamored of the grave, by hearing it described as a place of silence, and was strongly suspected of having taken a voluntary leave of life. If his relict had not mourned deeply for her bereavement, then there was no virtue in crape; for hers was of the finest quality, and was selected, with the discriminating eye of grief, from the most recent importations. Mrs. Sniff was frequently astonished to find herself on the very verge of forty, —a circumstance singular in itself, and well worthy of surprise, inasmuch as she had been christened somewhat over half a century; but she possessed a knack at aping girlhood which might almost cheat Father Time himself, and which, in the apprehensions of some neighboring spinsters, bade fair to prevent her being harvested in due season.

A snug little house and garden, and a very shadowy income, were the widow's, who, with a single servant, lived alone in a retired quarter of the city; and it was not without delight that she received propositions from a fine-looking foreigner to admit two young ladies into her household, not exactly as boarders, of course, but as companions and friends, who would pay a very liberal stipend for the favor, and ask no questions. But if Mrs. Sniff was delighted, she was careful not to appear so; she really did not know, she was entirely unused to anything of the kind; but she certainly had some

spare room, and if Captain Sill could assure her that the ladies were quite respectable, and would reflect no dishonor upon the roof of her dear departed Sniff, she thought she might bring herself to consent,—the pay, of course, to be in advance. The captain, who had kindly undertaken this commission, by reason of Father Ledra's ignorance of the English language, succeeded in satisfying the expected hostess of the entire worthiness of her guests, and in baffling her curious endeavors to ascertain any particulars of their history. The situation seemed to him in every way desirable. Seclusion was a primary object with Miss Montaigne, who was enjoined to hold herself in readiness to depart, whenever her father should be able to send an escort for her safety; and, in the meantime, to live as retired as possible, and, above all things, to conceal her real name. The preliminaries of a treaty were therefore arranged, not to be ratified, however, until after a personal inspection of the premises by Miss Emily; an inquisition, at the mention of which Mrs. Sniff exhibited much uneasiness, and begged it might be deferred until the following day. If the ladies were to be allowed to choose for themselves, it was manifestly quite a different affair. Fathers, and uncles, and guardians are easily gammoned, thought the widow, but when it comes to these meddling girls, flying about the house, peering into every corner, and turning up their noses at all the shifts and artifices of genteel poverty, that is another thing. And so it was. But forewarned is forearmed, thought Mrs. Sniff; and no sooner had the captain withdrawn, than the house was turned forthwith out of the windows, and thoroughly renovated, by the aid of two borrowed slaves, who, belonging to a Dutchman, had been taught that cleanliness was a cardinal virtue, and quite essential to salvation. Having thus made sure that no unbecoming sights or odors would greet the sensitive organs of her visitors, everything was carefully replaced, the scanty finery being skilfully divided between the two rooms designed for their use, and some very bountiful bouquets adorning the respective mantels. The little parlor below was made to do its

best, which was little more than to exhibit through an open window a fine view of the East river, and of the opposite shore of Long Island; the garden was put in hasty trim, and the widow herself, particularly prim, received Miss Roselle with many regrets that her house and premises were unusually out of order, by reason of a long catalogue of disturbing influences which she proceeded to relate. Emily had been cautioned not to be over particular, as the retirement would counterbalance many defects; and she tripped daintily about the house for some time, preceded by her chattering hostess, who herself decried everything with such an amazing humility that she quite disarmed criticism. But Miss Roselle was in truth surprised at the general air of neatness which she encountered; and contenting herself, therefore, with much indistinct murmuring, she dictated a few unimportant alterations, by way of a salvo to her authority, and at length condescendingly expressed her satisfaction.

"This will be your own room, I presume," said Mrs. Sniff, re-entering the better chamber; "it is the largest and most airy, and the view from the window is so charming."

"I think I shall prefer the other," Emily replied, slightly coloring, for she perceived that she was taken for the principal of the two strangers; "I do not fancy large rooms, and this love of a morning-glory under the window will be so delightful."

And so the bargain was concluded, and on the same day Blanche and Emily were quietly settled in their new quarters. It was with a singular feeling of desolation that Miss Montaigne contemplated her new position. Separated from her father for an indefinite period, and anticipating a speedy parting with both of her remaining protectors, she might well look forward with misgivings to the future. Father Ledra was to sail in a few days in a Dutch vessel bound to Holland, and was thus to regain his home; and Captain Sill, who by some private diplomacy with the governor had obtained permission to depart, took advantage of the same opportunity. They called together on the day of embarkation to take a final leave of

their young friends, and to commend them to the especial kindness of their hostess, who being, as she protested, but a girl herself, feared that she could not do much for them ; but promised to watch over them with a sisterly care.

“ We are three young things together, Captain Sill,” she said, delighted that she had so distinguished a personage under her roof, “ and my little dove-cot here, as I call it, is quite without a protector, since the loss of my poor dear —— ;” she did not *say* Sniff, but substituted the action for the word, which answered the purpose quite as well.

Blanche was deeply affected at parting with Father Ledra, for whom she had the sincerest regard ; nor did she fail to reciprocate the kindness of the worthy captain, who seemed to take almost a paternal interest in her welfare. Nothing, indeed, but the imperative claims of a beloved family at home would have induced him to leave New York, until he had seen Miss Montaigne re-united to her friends, and at times he felt disposed to urge her return with him to Paris, but the injunctions of the baron were, of course, a law which they had no right to disregard.

The departure of the visitors left Mrs. Sniff in a sad state of perplexity. There had been something of deference in their deportment towards the young ladies, which induced her to suspect that the latter must be persons of considerable distinction ; and the airs of Miss Emily and the reserve of the beautiful Blanche, both strengthened her suspicions. Here, then, was a rare turn in Fortune's wheel ; to have disguised countesses and marchionesses, or duchesses, perhaps, under her roof, and selecting her out from all the city for their friend and protectress. She always knew she had never been appreciated—Mrs. Sniff did ; and thought her time would come, and now at last it had. Her own excessive gentility had done it all,—she could see that clearly enough ; and it would never have happened if her poor dear Sniff had been in the way, who had always been a clog upon her, and prevented her from rising to she

knew not what heights of distinction. But it was still with no little trepidation that she looked forward to the duties imposed upon her by so delicate a station. She would, doubtless, she thought, be called upon to act as a sort of usher for the young ladies in good society, where they would of course be emulous to shine; and she began to think over the list of her visiting acquaintances to see who among them was of sufficient rank to serve her in such an emergency. There was young Shiel, a very distant cousin of her own, who was a fashionable man about town, and was said to be on intimate terms with Lord Cornbury. True, he was a scamping fellow, dissolute and worthless; but then he was genteel, and the very man whom it was her duty, as a friend and protectress of the young ladies, to introduce to them. But Shiel, unfortunately, could scarcely be reckoned as an acquaintance; for although there had long been a tradition in the family of her having once refused his hand at a dance in favor of her newly-betrothed Sniff; and although his apparition had frequently been raised in family altercations, to the great terror of that meek gentleman, as one of the "might have had" of his much injured spouse; notwithstanding all this, Shiel had coolly put up his eye-glass on meeting her for the last twenty years, and never succeeded in discovering who she was. But then Shiel was getting to be an elderly young man, and might be contemplating matrimony; and with such rare attractions as the dove-cot now possessed, he could of course be brought around. Well, then, there was Shiel to begin with. But Mrs. Sniff pondered a long time before she could think of any one else. There was the Dutch alderman at the corner, whose purse was supposed to be altogether bottomless, it was so very deep; but he was a crotchety old fellow who cared nothing for countesses; and his buxom daughter Sally, whose face was always blazing with the unexpired tints of the kitchen fire, could scarcely be shown off to much advantage. But then there was—strange that she had not thought of him sooner—young Henrich Huntington, so handsome, so aristocratic-looking, so

graceful and unpretending withal; and who had been educated in an English University, and for whom many a rich Dutch belle would have given her very ears, with their great golden drops in the bargain. True he was poor, but the countesses need never know that if he only kept his own counsel, which she had no doubt he would. And then, he had a love of a little sail-boat, and could give them such delightful excursions up the rivers and down the bays, and away off to Hedge-hog Point and Gibbet Island; which latter place, although not exactly a place of amusement, possessed the attraction of several capital swings, of such an enchaining character that those who once entered them could never tear themselves away. The widow Sniff, indeed, possessed a vivid imagination, and saw everything of the color of the rose, excepting her weeds, which she resolved to discard; and having emerged from her cloud of sables she could easily, she thought, fall back to thirty-five, by the aid of rings, ringlets, and a blonde veil. If her lodgers had thought her genteel before, what would they think then; and as to Mr. Shiel, why there was such a thing as reviving the embers of a decayed passion, and there was no telling what might happen; so the duchesses, after all, must take their chance.

Thus, long and sagely, did Mrs. Sniff plot and ponder; but all her schemes, like many originating in wiser heads, were destined to avail but little. Some of her aims remained unaccomplished, and others, as will be seen, attained a fulfilment which owed but little to her agency.

CHAPTER VI.

“Vine leaf and flower had newly burst,
And on the burden of the air
The breath of buds came faint and rare ;
And far in the transparent sky,
The small earth-keeping birds were seen,
Soaring deliriously high,
And through the clefts of newer green
The waters dashed their living pearls.”—*Willis*.

SOLITUDE and seclusion, doubtless, have their charms, but these were not found sufficient at all times to keep Blanche and Emily within the purlieus of the dove-cot. It was on a bright afternoon in June, not many days after they had become domiciled in their new home, that they ventured together upon a stroll, seeking to gain a glimpse of the world around them. Their hostess, who dealt largely in the marvellous, had held out, from time to time, divers intimations of impending dangers with which every other place was beset excepting the ground sheltered by her sacred roof; and Emily's excitable imagination became populous with buccaneers, banditti, ghosts, goblins, and witches, until almost every spot seemed to harbor one or another of these unwelcome neighbors. There was, indeed, an air of wildness and novelty pervading the new world into which she had been introduced, which favored the most colossal growth of credulity. Its many wonderful realities formed, of course, the basis of still more wonderful fables, and rendered the boundary line of rational belief not always easily discernible, even by more sagacious minds than that of Miss Roselle. Sleepless, however, as were her apprehensions, they did not extend to the anticipation of

danger on the present occasion, and the cousins, yearning for the freedom of the green fields and the open air, of which they had been so long restrained, went joyously upon their way. They passed through the central gate of the city, and following up the windings of a small creek, which led past some quiet farm-houses, they reached the base of the sandy embankment of which mention has been made, and toiled, panting, up its grassy sides, exhilarated by the deep inhalations of fresh air which they were forced to imbibe, and charmed with the widening circuit of view which each upward stage extended before them. Properly speaking, they could not be said before to have seen the magnificent spectacle of the bay of New York, which now, with its fairy islands, its romantic shores, and the entrance of its broad tributaries, the Hudson and East rivers, were comprised in a single picture, dwelling upon the eye with a most pleasing effect. They gazed long and delightedly, pointing out to each other the objects of attraction which successively fell under their notice, and for a while scarcely conscious that they were suffering from the sun of June, which, although far past the meridian, was pouring its slant rays through the air with an oppressive intensity. When at length, sated with the prospect, they turned their gaze northward, the adjacent forest, with its cool dense shades, presented an aspect too inviting to be resisted. There certainly could be no danger, they imagined, while keeping only in its border; and with some trepidation, arising from the mysterious warnings of their hostess, they ventured to avail themselves of the retreat. It was, indeed, a temptation difficult to resist. The voice of birds alone disturbed the tranquil repose of Nature, as, flitting from bough to bough, their tiny plumes flashed momentarily upon the eye; and the dreamy hum of the bee, as on gauzy wing suspended he now hung buzzing above some tempting flower, and now buried himself in its fragrant depths. A brook, most diminutive of its race, gurgled at their feet; and, as it rattled down the declivity towards a still thicker shade, seemed hastening with fear from the

scorching sunbeams which threatened its very existence. Strange odors were in the air, grateful to the sense, and hinting of forest flowers, hidden in a thousand lonely nooks, peeping from beneath piled leaves, crouching beside decayed logs, clinging to crevices of rocks, or bending above the glassy brook, and resting their warm petals on its wave.

Blanche possessed a spirit happily attuned to the harmonies of nature, and in unison with all its charms. Sorrow and fear, and a sense of loneliness, had clouded for a while her sunny heart, but it answered now with elastic impulse to the witcheries around her. She had recently recovered from the illness of her voyage, and the gradual re-action of her spirits had been suddenly accelerated until joy and hope and gratitude seemed to have filled her heart. The sunbeam was not brighter, the flowers were not purer, nor the singing birds more blithesome than was Blanche. Miss Roselle, although widely uncongenial to her cousin in the points most essential to friendship, was in the main a good-natured girl, and the possessor of some cleverness much obscured by conceit. Her romantic views of life, also, were continually conflicting with its common-place events, and not infrequently drawing upon herself a ridicule, which she was fortunate enough never to perceive. Such as she was, however, she was the only friend of Blanche, for whom she entertained a profound respect, not untinged with envy, and founded on qualities which were lightly prized by their possessor—her beauty and rank. The latter was too painfully connected with the idea of an unfeeling parent to be the subject of much self-gratulation; and mere personal charms, in a mind constituted like Blanche's, are little valued until they have proved an attraction to some beloved object. Then, indeed, does beauty vindicate its power, and the heart, however innocent and artless, learns to prize every minute charm and grace which can help to rivet the rosy chains of love.

Half an hour had glided past, while Blanche and Emily had tarried just within the edge of the woods, at times roaming idly

about, and at times seated conversing upon a fallen tree : they were in the latter position, absorbed in the examination of a rare and beautiful wild-flower, when a quick sudden tramp was heard at their side, and they sprang in terror to the ground. The appearance of the intruder was one that might reasonably have excited some alarm in the minds of the ladies, even had they not been, as they were, highly predisposed to that emotion; for an armed man, with marks of blood not only upon his garments, but upon his face, stood at their side. Emily uttered a succession of piercing shrieks, and fled towards the city; while Blanche, with a contagious terror, fell fainting to the earth. The stranger, who was none other than the young Huntington returning from the singular adventure which has been related in a preceding chapter, and who had not perceived the ladies until they sprang from their seat, stood paralysed for a moment with contending emotions. He was indeed scarcely less startled than those to whom he had proved such an object of dread, and before he could recover sufficient self-possession either to recall Miss Roselle or to conjecture the probable cause of her fright, she had disappeared over the brow of the hill. His attention was immediately given to Blanche, whose extraordinary beauty, as she lay seemingly lifeless before him, was scarcely less a matter of surprise than everything else connected with the adventure. He sprang to the neighboring brook, and bringing water in his cap, dashed it freely and not without effect, in the face of the patient, who slowly revived, but on the sight of Henrich standing near had well nigh swooned a second time. The young man hastened to allay her fears by such explanations and assurances of safety as the excited state of his own feelings would permit him to make, and he had the happiness of seeing her in a short time restored to a comparative degree of composure.

“I fear we have been very foolish,” she said, smiling faintly, as Huntington assisted her to rise, “but we are strangers in the country, and have been taught, perhaps, some unnecessary apprehensions.”

So saying, she turned to depart, when Huntington begged that

he might be allowed to accompany and protect her from further danger, a proposal which, in her still weak and trembling state, she could scarcely refuse. She was yet far from certain that the stranger was not an outlaw of some kind, but his courteous manner partly assuaged her alarm, and she did not feel disposed to risk giving offence by refusing his civilities. The blood-stains were still upon him, and her own blood ran cold as she saw them, yet she dared not appear to observe such a seeming token of crime in her companion. They walked slowly together, but the brook which they were compelled to cross, fortunately recalled to Henrich an intention which he had formed before his recent adventure, of making his ablutions in its waters. With this remembrance came of course a sudden consciousness of his appearance, and coloring to the temples, he quickly explained everything to his fair companion, and then hastened to the cleansing wave. It was no small relief to Miss Montaigne to feel convinced, as she now did, that all her suspicions were unfounded; and when Henrich re-appeared, with freshened features and smiling face, the last vestige of her fears had departed.

“Let us hasten and find poor Emily,” she said, “who may have fainted upon the road, for her fright, I believe, was greater, if possible, than mine.”

Miss Roselle, however, had reached home nearly senseless, and scarcely able to articulate; but she had succeeded in informing her frightened hostess that Blanche had been carried forcibly off by a horrid-looking bandit, armed to the teeth, and that she herself had narrowly escaped the same fate. Her arrival, however, had fortunately been retarded by the indirect route which she had taken, and before any alarm could be communicated to the neighbors, Blanche and Henrich were distinctly seen at a distance, descending the hill side, and approaching towards home.

“She’s rescued—she’s rescued,” shouted Emily, and darting from the house, she hastened to meet her friend with every token of delight. Visions of chivalrous knights of the silver cross or the

golden plume, began to pass through her mind, and she only regretted that she did not see her swooning cousin, hanging, with dishevelled hair, across the pommel of the saddle, held by one gauntleted hand of her rescuer, while another guided his fiery steed. Reluctantly pardoning the approaching hero for the absence of the horse and its accessories, she was conning fit phrases to commend his bravery, when the merry smiles of Blanche and something in the appearance of her companion began to impress her with a mortifying presentiment of the true state of the case. As this was at once verified by her cousin's explanation, Miss Roselle was not a little discomfited, but inasmuch as Henrich politely took his leave after consigning his charge to her care, she still entertained the hope that he might be a bandit after all, who had indulged in a sudden fit of magnanimity. Convinced that this was not probable, her hopes successively fell to a smuggler and a housebreaker, and she was sure he bore a resemblance to some pictures she had seen of such characters, who were quite apt, she said, to be handsome, with small white necks, and waving hair. That he did not dare to accompany them quite home, that he departed in the direction of the woods on pretence of having forgotten his gun, that he did not mention his name or inquire Blanche's, or ask permission to call and learn if she had quite recovered, were so many arguments for her opinion; and Miss Montaigne, much amused, did not care to controvert a position which, however convinced of its incorrectness, she had no means of disproving. On reaching home they found Mrs. Sniff fully inclined to adopt the views of Emily, but when the cousins had with much difficulty agreed upon a tolerably correct description of the stranger, she could not fail to recognise the picture as that of Mr. Huntington, on whom she had previously bestowed a glowing panegyric in their presence. Emily was therefore driven from the last foothold of her romantic theory, and abandoning it with little grace she contrived to throw the burden of her blunder on the widow to whose unnecessary warnings all their alarm was attributa-

ble. Mrs. Sniff was a lady of meek manners, when policy dictated humility, and she shouldered the reproach manfully, only hoping that the dear young ladies might never find occasion to credit her assertions more fully.

To Henrich the adventure was fraught with interest; the impression made by the charms of Blanche, and especially by her artless and graceful deportment, hung around him like a spell. Her swoon and recovery, her succeeding alarm, and her final relief from apprehension, had presented with rapid transition, so many phases of a beauty, which dazzled alike in each, and seemed an epitome of every variety of loveliness. Mingled with this admiration, a strong curiosity pervaded his mind. Who was this fascinating stranger, and from what region, benighted by her absence, had she come, to irradiate the New World with her charms? Such were the questions which, in a moment of enthusiasm, Henrich mentally propounded, and which, smiling at his own ardor, he determined speedily to solve. Not that it could avail him aught to know. If the bright picture would bear a close and continued inspection, if there was no dark reverse to its first dazzling surface, his fears at once suggested some other barrier, high and insuperable, which would intervene between himself and so attractive an object. Hope, like the hooded falcon, refused to soar, and gained with difficulty even an upward glance of aspiration. How strange a feature of the human heart is that which adjusts its doubts to the magnitude of its desires, and sees, by the light which streams from some coveted goal, only the obstacles which crowd the path of attainment!

But Henrich reflected with pleasure that politeness demanded of him a visit to the strangers after their singular meeting; and he did not hesitate to call upon them on the same evening. He was received with evident pleasure by both the ladies, and the event of the day formed the theme of no little merriment.

“It was really very ridiculous of us, Mr. Huntington,” said

Blanche, "and you must be generous enough not to tell the story greatly to our disadvantage: please to throw in a few additional marks of blood, for our excuse and, if possible, the wolf's head and ears."

"It is quite unnecessary, Miss Roselle," replied Henrich; "the rivulet in which I washed told me that your fears were fully justifiable. I little thought that my encounter with the beast would be the cause of so much suffering."

"Do not speak of it," Blanche rejoined; "the joke is well worth its cost—but pray, tell us, what were your own sensations at so strange an interruption to your reverie?"

"You will laugh," answered Henrich, "when I tell you, that at first I fully believed I had startled a covey of partridges; the fluttering of dresses was not unlike the noise of their wings, and the fallen tree, which is the frequent resort of these birds, doubtless confirmed the illusion."

"This is really quite too bad!" exclaimed Miss Montaigne; "I had fully hoped to make you own to a little fright or trepidation, or something that might make an offset to our fears; but instead of that, it seems we have all the ridicule to ourselves, and have narrowly escaped being shot, as birds, besides."

"You are truly unfortunate," said Henrich. "I do not see that your misery admits of any palliation."

"Well, well," continued Blanche, laughing; "we may at least be thankful that Mr. Huntington did not mistake us for owls instead of partridges, which our stupidity would have rendered quite excusable."

The interview was prolonged somewhat beyond the limits of a formal call, and when Henrich rose to depart, it was with a reluctance that surprised himself. Mrs. Sniff politely asked him to repeat his visit, and, unconsciously, his eye turned to Miss Montaigne, with the hope of hearing the invitation seconded from the only quarter which could give it value; but Blanche, with instinc-

tive delicacy, remained silent, and Emily, to whom, in her character as an elder sister, such a duty more properly pertained, saw fit to follow her cousin's example. After a moment's hesitation, the visiter replied ceremoniously, and withdrew. With admiration undiminished, hope unaugmented, curiosity unsated, he returned slowly and thoughtfully to his home. If Miss Montaigne had given the simplest form of assent to the widow's polite request—a bow, a smile, or even a marked look, there would have been a little loop on which to hang a little hope of favor; now there was none, and he might not again seek their presence. The rumors of their rank, which Mrs. Sniff sedulously diffused, doubtless by way of aiding their design of seclusion, did not fail soon afterwards to reach his ears, and confirmed him in the mortifying belief that the omission of the much coveted invitation was by no means accidental.

CHAPTER VII.

“She’s beautiful, and therefore to be woo’d ;
She is woman, and therefore to be won.”—*Shaks.,—Henry VI.*

MAJOR ST. GEORGE GROVER was a man who had made some converts to the doctrine of total depravity ; yet he was far from being a polemic, and might have found it difficult to tell what were his own views on that much mooted point. Of an aristocratic and wealthy family in England, he had long pursued an unremitting career of profligacy in that country, whence he had but recently transplanted his vices into the New World, where, it need scarcely be said, they took deep root, and produced an abundant harvest ; not dissimilar, indeed, to some indigenous crops in the same soil, for earth, unfortunately, has no clime in which sin is an exotic.

Major Grover was one of the individuals who had accompanied Lord Cornbury on board the *St. Cloud*, where he had been a silent observer of events, had been struck with Miss Montaigne’s beauty, had stared at her with relentless effrontery, and, scarcely aside, had laughed merrily with Ensign Midge over some jeering remarks upon her charms. He had at once resolved on becoming acquainted with so attractive a person ; and he saw with delight that her companion was a simpleton, and her protector a priest of the proscribed school. For many days he had lost trace of the strangers, but he discovered their retreat at length, and learned, by singular assiduity, the history and situation of their hostess, with the prominent traits of her character. He learned, too, that beau Shiel was a distant relative of the widow, rather beyond speaking distance, it is true,

but privileged, of course, at any time to resume the claims of kin. Shiel on his request did not hesitate to call on Mrs. Sniff, much to her delight, and to express his regrets that the cares of business had prevented him for some little time preceding from keeping bright the chain of friendship between himself and his respected cousin. But the widow said it was not to be spoken of, and she was sure she was much obliged to Mr. Shiel for remembering her at all; and so a footing was very soon established for that gentleman in the dove-cot; and he knew, as he expressed himself to Major Grover, exactly where he stood. He did not know where the ladies stood, however, for, equally to his own chagrin and that of Mrs. Sniff, they did not descend to the drawing-room, and the widow was compelled to manufacture two extemporaneous headaches in their behalf. She took the opportunity, however, to hint at the scrupulosity of rank, and informed Mr. Shiel that she would try to prevent a recurrence of his disappointment, if he would do her the honor to dine with her on the ensuing day, an invitation at which he secretly exulted, and which, after a very studious perusal of some blank tablets, to make sure that he had no other engagements, he graciously accepted.

But now came Mrs. Sniff's turn to be delighted, aye, to be thrown into a very paroxysm of silent ecstasies; for Mr. Shiel craved the very particular favor of being allowed to bring with him his friend, the Honorable Major Grover, a gentleman of ancient family, who could trace his lineage back to the days of the Conquest, and was even suspected of having had ancestors before that period; but that was mere conjecture. The favor was of course readily accorded, and the visitor took his leave, with a profusion of courteous words and gestures, in which line, however, he scarcely transcended the remarkable exploits of the widow, who seemed to respond with a sort of mesmeric motion to all the grimaces and genuflections of her visitor.

It had been a rash and unconsidered thing, Mrs. Sniff's invitation

had, and the subject lay all that night upon her mind with peculiar heaviness. Strange visions haunted her sleep. Her lodgers had again proved refractory, and would not leave their rooms, and her illustrious visitors and herself were vainly trying to dine upon a pair of boiled epaulettes, which defied all her attempts at carving, and were quite deficient in gravy besides. If she tried to propitiate Blanche, she was pelted with glass slippers for her pains; and Emily, taught by her friend's example, proved equally intractable. The dews of anxious thought were upon the widow's brow when she awoke in the morning, which was necessarily at an early hour; for, to secure such a result, she had compelled a bantam rooster, famed for his vociferous greetings of the dawn, to take lodgings in her room. She set earnestly about the labors of the day, and engaged in the preparations for dinner with such enthusiasm, as to quite overlook the minor matter of breakfast, a meal which, by the customs of that age, was clearly entitled to precedence. She was fortunately, however, reminded of this slight blunder by a voracious serving girl, whose seldom-sated appetite proved a faithful monitor on the occasion.

Fearful that Blanche and Emily would in some way slip through her fingers, after all, it was not until the latest allowable minute that she informed them of her expected guests; they were only some of her particular friends, she said, who would take things quite as they found them, and were not to be treated with ceremony. Major Grover was so fond of his beloved England, that he longed to see any one who had recently trod its blessed shores, so Mr. Shiel had said, and she thought it was a very pretty sentiment, and one which did equal honor to his heart and his gizzard—which last word was a *lapsus linguæ* of the widow, occasioned by a sudden remembrance of a contemplated chicken fricasee, in which those parts of the dissected fowl were to figure.

Miss Montaigne did not absent herself from the great dinner, for she had not the heart to disappoint her anxious hostess, and,

doubtless, was not quite devoid of curiosity to see one of the lions of New York society; while Emily was delighted beyond bounds at an event so full of promise. The visitors came in due season, and were introduced in due form. The widow and Miss Roselle, who were both elaborately dressed, seemed equally to captivate the obliging Shiel, who quite gave up the beautiful Blanche to the attentions of his friend. That these were anything but pleasing to her would have been quite apparent to an indifferent observer; but Grover, being quite fascinated by his companion, fell into the common error of believing that she was equally pleased. It will not be necessary to record more minutely the events of a day, memorable only for laying the foundation of an acquaintance, which the major strove sedulously to improve, and which led to some striking results. For a while he persecuted Blanche with attentions seemingly respectful, but which took no form sufficiently definite to admit of effectual repulse. She avoided him when she could, and when she could not, was coldly civil, and ceremoniously polite. Thus affairs stood for a few weeks, when an event occurred which wrought a marked change in the designs of the suitor. He chanced one evening at a *restaurateur's* to hear the name of Roselle pronounced in a foreign accent, and upon observation he discovered two Frenchmen of the lower class, conversing together in their own language, and in a low tone of voice. A little attention enabled him to perceive that the colloquists were sailors who had formed part of the crew of the St. Cloud, and that they were discussing some events connected with its capture. Seemingly engrossed in some other matter, he contrived to pay the closest attention to their discourse, which was the less guarded, because they supposed their dialect to be unintelligible to the other individuals present.

From this conversation Grover learned the important fact that the younger of the two ladies passing under the name of Roselle was, in reality, a daughter of the celebrated Baron Montaigne, who, on arriving at New York, had assumed the obscurer name which she now bore,

and that she only awaited some expected opportunity to be provided by her father, for leaving the city. This information was full of interest to the listener, and for a while he could not decide how best to avail himself of its advantages. Despite his self-flattery, he was conscious that he had as yet made no advances in Blanche's affections adequate to his exertions; and it was now a solace to his pride to believe that if he was baffled it was by one, conscious of rank temporarily obscured, which might claim an equality with his own. What then if he should abandon his irrational prejudices against matrimony, and seek this peerless beauty with an honest love? The hymeneal fetters could not be as onerous as they had been represented, especially if one were disposed to wear them loosely, as he certainly should do. Blanche would adorn any circle; her dowry, if not immediate, would, doubtless, be princely at some future day; and he would carry her back to England to eclipse the crowds of Lady Janes and Lady Annes, whose virtuous mamas had denounced him as an irreclaimable *roué*, and had shown as much perturbation at his appearance in their guarded circles, as the clattering hen when the hawk hovers in the air. He would, besides, have the credit of great generosity and disinterestedness; for he would woo and wed the stranger in her assumed name, seemingly ignorant of her true rank and expected patrimony. Thus would he also pay the higher compliment to her attractions, and make more sure of her regard. But on the last point he indulged no fears; the thought of a refusal did not enter into his mind, and would have been scouted as the very ravings of delirium. Having thus resolved, he kept his own counsel and lost no time in inaction. There was, at once, a marked change in the character of his addresses to Blanche, who, finding no coolness sufficient to discourage him, rejoiced at the prospect of being soon able to give him a peremptory dismissal. She was not kept long awaiting such an opportunity, but found it a difficult thing to convince her astonished suitor that she really rejected his offer. It was again and again renewed, and the haughty

major found himself under the mortifying necessity of crying up his value, and explaining the magnanimity of his proposal. His wealth, his rank, his family, were all dilated upon as creating a disparity of advantages in his favor, which might well entitle him to look for a different answer. But no different answer came. Blanche was obliged to him for his good opinion ; she had endeavored, since the first suspicion of his sentiments, to discourage him, and she begged that her decision might be considered final and conclusive.

Grover retired from this interview,—not a lover,—but a madman. Opposition had inflamed his passion, wounded his vanity, awakened his pride, and called into intense action every evil part of his nature. He was capable of making a mock of every moral obligation, when his mind was undisturbed ; what he could do in its present dangerous ebullition, remains to be seen.

CHAPTER VIII.

“Win her with gifts, if she respect not words;
Dumb jewels often, in their silent kind,
More quick than words, do move a woman’s mind.”

—*Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

“Within the oyster’s shell uncouth
The purest pearl may hide :—
Trust me—you’ll find a heart of truth
Within that rough outside.”—*Mrs. Osgood.*

THE movements of Major Grover for the few days succeeding the events last related were of a singular character. He was much alone, was often wrapt in contemplation, and occasionally gave way to unusual expressions of feeling. At times he was closeted with a rough sailor-like man, to whom, in the presence of third parties, he talked loudly of cargoes and consignments, but for whose private ear he had other themes. Captain Snell had just arrived in the city, and his ship, anchored off Staten Island, had not yet been able to get into port, notwithstanding the most favorable winds that ever wafted keel. He had, indeed, a rich cargo of goods, which he had procured with much labor and peril on the high seas, and he wanted a market and protection while he disposed of his property: he wanted, as he significantly said, “to be winked at” by the government. He needed in short exactly what Grover could procure for him, which the latter very well knew, and he played his card accordingly.

“It’s only a wedding trip, Captain Snell,” he said, summing up the substance of many previous remarks to his acquiescent auditor; “a few weeks’ absence, a little assistance, perhaps, in conveying my

bride to the vessel, and your evidence if necessary afterwards, that it was all fair and voluntary—that's all."

"That's all easy enough, major," replied the sailor,—“I did something such a job once for a count in Lisbon, and she was quiet enough when we got back; they won't prosecute their husbands, of course, and have to make the best of it.”

"That's it, exactly," said Grover, who next proceeded to explain the details of his proposed plan, to all of which the other listened attentively, and pronounced it easily practicable.

"It isn't anything at all," he said; "I thought it must be a life and death affair, at least, from the way you tacked and shifted around the subject before you came to it; but it aint anything, that aint, and she lives where she is so easily to be got at, too; just let me know when you are ready—that's all."

Grover, who was quite in earnest in his infernal scheme, proceeded to make the necessary arrangements, yet without taking any one fully into his confidence. The temporary absence of the widow and Emily was to be procured; and Shiel was considered the fitting agent for this part of the enterprise. On the day selected he invited the ladies to take a drive with him on Long Island; and easily accepting Blanche's excuse, which had been anticipated, he found little difficulty in persuading the other two to accompany him. That there was mischief on foot of some kind, he very well knew, but of what particular variety, he was ignorant. It would have been easy to lure the servant girl from home, who was a colored slave about twenty years old; but as such a measure might excite Blanche's suspicions, it was resolved rather to kidnap and dispose of her at some southern market. Unwilling, however, to resort to these extreme measures, while there remained the slightest hopes of success by milder means, and still flattering himself that Miss Montaigne might already have repented her decision, Grover resolved to make first a final effort at persuasion. He had, indeed, exhausted every variety of blandishment; he had practised all those pleasing

arts which a life of gallantry had taught him ; but he would make one additional effort, and fortify it, if necessary, by disclosing to Blanche the mesh with which she was surrounded, and from which she could indulge no hope of escape.

It was a calm afternoon in June that had been selected for this daring and atrocious exploit, and Miss Montaigne, seated alone in the little parlor which has been described, was reflecting upon the marked events which had recently diversified her life, and changed it from one of singular monotony to one of unusual and varied action. What fortune was in store for her in that mysterious future which seemed thickly shrouded from her view, it was impossible to conjecture. Separated since infancy from every near relation, she was about to join a parent who manifested no affection for her, and one whose Huron wife and half Huron daughter would occupy towards her the legal relation of mother and sister. With such companions she was to pass her time, buried in the forest, and even of less consequence than her Indian sister, who doubtless at least possessed the affection and regard of her savage relations. Of Myrtle and her mother she could only think as of tawny and blanketed women, like those of their race whom she had seen during her abode in New York. It was a dismal prospect to contemplate closely : but Blanche would not yield to despondency ; there was, after all, something of wildness and romance in the picture, and her playful imagination gave to it tints and hues which belonged less to the subject than to the joyous and innocent heart from which they emanated. She resolved, too, to find happiness in duty ; she would soften her father's heart by unremitting kindness ; she would educate her Indian sister, and surprise her with the thousand novelties of civilized life ; she would even make a friend of the dreaded baroness, if the latter were not altogether a cannibal, and past the hope of reclamation. What pets, too, she would have ! A pair of gentle fawns should feed daily from her hands, and race with her through the fields ; the rabbits should burrow in the garden ; the birds

should build beside her windows; and the clambering flowers, exhaling an atmosphere of fragrance, should tempt the bee, and the tiny hummer, and the gorgeous butterfly; and all these would be her friends and playmates.

As Blanche gazed from time to time out of the window while engaged in these reflections, her eye was attracted by several rough looking individuals in the garb of sailors, who were idly sauntering in the vicinity. One leaned indolently against a post at a little distance from the house, trolling some nautical chorus; another lay stretched upon the grass on the common; and a party of three, further towards the river, were chatting and smoking beneath a tree, but not giving way, as might be expected from sailors on furlough, to any noisy mirth. She felt some alarm at first, remembering the isolated situation of the house, but inasmuch as the men remained quiet, and made no nearer approach, her apprehensions soon subsided. She remembered the ludicrous results of her fears in the forest a few weeks preceding, and resolved not again to play so childish a part. She had, indeed, withdrawn her eyes from the landscape and was again wrapt in contemplation, when she became suddenly conscious that she was no longer alone, and on looking up she discovered the detested Grover at her side. He had entered the room with a silent and cat-like motion, and there was something in the bland expression of his face and in the soft, purring tone of his voice as he addressed her, equally feline in its character.

“I have again come unbidden,” he said; “may I hope not entirely unwelcome? One of my vessels, long due, has arrived since I left your presence, and I have hastened to lay some of its treasures at your feet.”

An attendant at his signal entered the room, and depositing a large package upon a table, immediately withdrew: Grover followed him to the door, which he carefully closed, and returning, proceeded to open the parcel, while Blanche, who had before made several ineffectual efforts to speak, rose suddenly to her feet.

“Do not open it,” she said, speaking with some vehemence, yet in a low, trembling voice, “do not leave it, Major Grover. I can accept no favors which I have neither the power nor the wish to requite ; if I have not, heretofore, spoken plainly——”

“But too plainly, my dear Miss Roselle ; but ladies are proverbially changeful, even as the shifting colors of this beautiful silk,” unfolding and displaying a piece of the most gorgeous fabric, and piling upon it a profusion of rich laces——“these might make bridal robes for a princess ; and here,” he continued, unclasping a box of costly jewelry, “are ornaments which would adorn all other beauty, but which will receive new lustre from Miss Blanche Roselle.”

Miss Montaigne looked on with scorn, and cast frequent glances towards the door, as if with a presentiment that an attempt at egress might be opposed ; there was something strange and threatening in the eye and manner of her suitor, which impressed her with vague forebodings ; and, seemingly without design, she slightly changed her position to one more favorable for flight. The movement was not unnoticed by Grover, who also, with apparent inadvertence, placed himself between her and the door, and somewhat changing the tone of his voice, continued :

“I have made all allowances for the modesty, which, Cæsar-like, has thrice refused what it intended from the first to accept. My rank and wealth have, I know, rendered you incredulous as to the honesty of my intentions ; you have, perhaps, even heard some old-wives’ tales of deserted flower-girls or heart-broken milk-maids, whose cause you may be chivalrous enough to wish to avenge—but to you, beautiful Blanche, I swear perpetual fealty ; for your sake, I will bear the chains of Hymen, and as you so much mistrust me, I will ask not even the favor of a smile until we are wedded.”

A passing color and a quick breathing alone told of the suppressed indignation of the listener ; she did not dare to reply ; the words of her companion were those of entreaty, but his voice was in a tone of command, and there was a menacing expression in his face, which

overpowered her with fear. She cast a hurried glance from the window in the anxious hope of seeing Emily and Mrs. Sniff returning, or of seeing some visiter approaching the house ; but there was nothing that gave prospect of relief. She did not dare to attempt to pass out lest she should learn that she was really a prisoner, and should precipitate whatever of evil she had to fear. She resolved, therefore, to gain time by parley, but even in this design she seemed to be anticipated by her persecutor. He continued to urge his suit as yet in respectful language, but the uneasiness of his air, and his frequent outward glances, seemed to indicate the expected approach of some other party. He was, in fact, awaiting the promised arrival of a legal functionary, who was authorized to tie the matrimonial knot, and on whose perfect subserviency to his interests he could depend ; on his approach, if persuasion continued fruitless, he had determined at once to disclose to Blanche her peril, and make the alternative proposition of instantaneous marriage or abduction. The suddenness of the demand, the imminency of the danger, the few minutes which she would be allowed to decide, combined with the force of prior arguments, he did not doubt would overcome every obstacle and produce a complete acquiescence. But while he waited, he grew momentarily impatient ; delays were dangerous ; there was indeed no fear of the return of Shiel and his companions, and one of the sentinels was even prepared to prevent the casual approach of strangers to the house, by the alarm of an infectious disease which was to be sedulously shunned. But still he felt that haste was desirable ; and although it was not yet the appointed time for his coadjutor's arrival, he resolved to go personally and expedite his movements. Blanche, he thought, was yet unalarmed, and although, perhaps, angry at his pertinacity, she did not, he believed, entertain the least suspicion of his design. She would not, therefore, think of flight, and if she attempted could not accomplish it, for the pirates had orders to prevent her departure, and if she persisted in going or in making an outcry, they were to carry her forcibly to

the vessel. He departed, therefore, without giving her any intimation of his intended return, and only paused near the door to give directions to one of the banditti for additional vigilance during the few minutes of his expected absence. But Miss Montaigne, as has been already seen, was by no means unalarmed ; her first fears had been allayed, but the strange deportment of Grover and the continued presence of the sailors who still lounged listlessly about the premises, now combined to excite her worst apprehensions.

It has been said that there was in the house besides Miss Montaigne, one individual, too insignificant to be dreaded, even as an informant, yet whom Grover intended to include, if convenient, in his kidnapping enterprise. Jule, for such was the slave's name, had belonged to the Sniffs from childhood, and her faculties had been somewhat sharpened by the necessity of inventing expedients to evade some of her mistress's inordinate exactions of labor. She was a good-natured girl, warm in her attachments, and, since the arrival of Miss Montaigne, had manifested the greatest pleasure in serving her. Unused to words of kindness and consideration from those above her, Jule had seen the beautiful stranger manifesting an occasional interest in her welfare, which had astonished and delighted her ; and the heart of the negress had closed with avidity upon this rare object of affection. Nothing could be too good, nothing too nice for Miss Blanche : and the least smile of approval from her was more than a reward for every exertion of the humble servitor.

Powerless as such an ally might seem, Miss Montaigne hastened to seek her counsel and aid ; but Jule, already alarmed, and flying from what seemed the post of more imminent danger, met her with intelligence that confirmed all her fears, and added tenfold to their intensity. She had herself watched the strange movements of the men, had noticed their sailor-like garb, and had overheard Grover's instructions, on departing, for a vigilant watch, and forbidding any egress from the house. There was little time for reflection ; and Blanche implored the negress to make an attempt to escape and

seek assistance. That Miss Montaigne was the principal object of pursuit, and that whatever danger impended over herself would not be enhanced by flight, even if unsuccessful, Jule readily saw; but even if it had been otherwise, she would have refused nothing to Blanche. With ready wit, too, she reflected that if she went out, apparently unalarmed, and as if bound on some ordinary errand, she might perhaps be allowed to pass unmolested. Her absence might even be considered an advantage, inasmuch as the abduction of one individual could of course be accomplished more safely and quietly than that of two. Hanging a basket, therefore, upon her arm, and hastily informing Blanche of her design, she sauntered lazily from the door, singing, with half-choked voice, a negro refrain, and carefully dissembling her fears. Her exit was from the rear door, and her course through the garden towards a lane in its rear, led directly past two of the guards. They had been instructed to prevent any attempt at flight; but they had also been ordered not to excite any premature alarm or suspicion on the part of the inmates of the house, and for a moment they hesitated on their proper course. Here was evidently no flight; the slave would soon return, and if not, her absence would rather do good than harm; and with this view of the matter, they had well nigh permitted her to pass, when one, still undecided, suddenly accosted her.

“Avast—there, avast, Nan! You sing merrily for a blackbird—just drop alongside here, and tell us where you are bound to; ’taint every one that dares to sail openly under such dark colors—is it, Jack?”

“You mind yer own business, and git out of our garden, afore Mrs. Sniff sees you, or you’ll ketch it,” answered Jule. “I’m going to pick peas over in dat field; ‘Massa eat de sugar, Sambo git de cane;’” and she passed tremblingly on towards the fence.

“Blast the blackamoor!” exclaimed the sailor, following as he spoke; “can’t you answer a civil hail better than that? bring to, I

say, and show your papers, or we'll blow you out of water—but if as how," he continued, as Jule slackened her pace, and looked back, "if as how you are really under sailing orders for that field, over there——"

"I didn't say any such thing," replied Jule, "and I haint got any papers, nor notting elst but dis ere pail."

"Let her go, Bill, or elst don't let her go, one or t'other," said the other sailor; "what's the use of jabbering to the wench? *I* says, let her go, and very good riddance it is."

"And *I* says, mebbe not, Mr. Jack," said the first speaker, who seemed to imbibe the spirit of contradiction from the interference of his companion; "you just bring her to a minute, while I run around and ask Bluff about it, kase, you see, it's a kind of a nice question, after all."

So poor Jule was brought to, and compelled to await the decision of higher authority.

"It's a high time of day," she said, with affected wrath,—“if people can't come for to go in their own mistress's garden, which they've lived with twenty years—in broad daylight, it is—you let go my arm, you scaramouch, you!”

"Steady, lass, steady," replied Jack, "least said, soonest mended; I aint no scarrymouse, neither, and it's well for you you aint aboard, or you might get a dozen or two for your impudence."

With emotions that cannot be portrayed, Blanche beheld from a window the scene which has been described; she saw Jule unaccompanied, nearly pass the guard, and, after a temporary detention, resume her progress, only to be a second time stopped and questioned, and held rudely by the arm. While she waited with fearful misgivings for the result, the bandit, who has been called Bill, returned from his embassy, and, speaking in a voice that reached the ears of Miss Montaigne, said, "Mr. Bluff says there aint so much as a cat to go out of the house, 'cause she mout be a kind of carrier-pigeon, like, you see, which this ere thing don't look much like, of course;

but then she must trot back notwithstanding, and no words about it either."

Jule hesitated for a moment; but there was nothing to do but submit, and with a heavy heart she returned to the house, where Blanche was already giving way to all the anguish of despair.

CHAPTER IX.

“What masking stuff is here ?

What's this ?—a sleeve ? 'tis like a demi-cannon.”—*Taming of the Shrew.*

IF consternation had paralysed the faculties of Miss Montaigne, it gave new energies to the slave. With the celerity and nearly the fierceness of an imprisoned wild-cat, she flew from window to window, seeking to catch sight of some casual passer, to whom she might shriek for help ; but no one was visible, and every hope of succor from without was abandoned. Yet her resources did not seem to be exhausted. Pausing a moment for thought, she suddenly darted up the kitchen stairway, and before Blanche could conjecture her designs, she re-appeared with various articles of apparel, both of her own and Miss Montaigne, including the bonnet and veil of the latter and an ample hood of her own.

“Be quick,” she said, signifying her meaning more by motions than words, “let us change clothes—dey will chase Jule, Miss Blanche will run away.”

Miss Montaigne startled at the strange proposition, having no confidence in its success, and unwilling to subject the slave to the increased peril which success would involve, hesitated to assent ; but Jule, disposing summarily of her objections, proceeded to partly disrobe her young mistress and to substitute her own coarse and clumsy garments for the elegant apparel of the other. The dimensions of the negress were, fortunately, not materially different from those of Miss Montaigne, but there were some awkward discrepancies of shape, which it required ingenious expedients to overcome. An

ample frock of the fabric usually called linsey-woolsey easily concealed the graceful outline of Blanche's form, but at the same time threw into more apparent disproportion the tiny feet and ancles which it left revealed. This, however, did not escape the eye of Jule, who chuckled as she produced three pairs of coarse hose, with which she proceeded to indue the dangerous members; and when a pair of thick, heavy shoes, tied with leathern strings, was added to the equipment, she declared that the effect was grand, and that the feet were exactly like her own. The wide, dark hood was next thrown over Blanche's head and neck, and drawn close in front, care being taken that no stray ringlet should peep from beneath its edges.

The work of disguising thus far had proceeded rapidly, although with but little diminution of terror on the part of Miss Montaigne, who expected momentarily that the return of Grover would terminate her hopes of flight. They had but a few minutes at the furthest to complete their task, and yet the most difficult part of the labor remained to be done. It was, indeed, no easy matter to array the coarse and crooked frame of the negress in a lady's dress; yet, inasmuch as the fortunate correspondence in height obviated what might have proved the most insuperable difficulty, much was hoped from the trial. No ingenuity, indeed, could diminish the ample shoulders of Jule, or close the wide-gaping dress of silk around her waist; yet a light shawl, judiciously arranged, partly concealed the defect. The feet and ancles, of dimensions hopelessly large, defied every attempt at compression, and when viewed in connexion with the backward extension of the heel, threatened a quick betrayal of the deceit. Although clad in stockings of fine texture, and in shoes slitted at heel and toe to increase their width, little could be hoped in regard to them, excepting that in the confusion of flight they might escape observation. Not that Jule herself perceived the difficulty; however sagacious on other points she saw no ground for apprehension here, and eyed the arrangement with much complacency.

“’Em looks berry well, Missa Blanche,” she said; “daze a little larger dan yours, a berry leetle, but nuffin to signify.”

Miss Montaigne’s bonnet and veil were next carefully adjusted upon the girl; and to perfect as far as possible the disguise, Blanche quickly severed a few of her glossy ringlets, and securing them to the crisped hair of the negress, suffered the ends to fall a little below the edge of the bonnet upon every side. The sable throat was carefully concealed by a collar, the veil drawn closely over the face, and the hands enclosed in gloves of black, which, although bursting in every part, revealed no contrasting color from within, and still seemed whole. The adjustment of the curls was a happy thought, and did more to complete the illusion than almost everything beside; for, hanging around the poor slave’s neck with a graceful and tremulous motion, nothing could be less suggestive of the woolly treasures to which they were appended; they hinted rather of the snowy cheeks and neck of their true proprietress, which, with many other charms, might well be supposed to lie hidden beneath the flowing veil.

Such as they were, the disguises were at length completed, and Blanche began to indulge a faint hope of success. Imitating, as best she could, the attitude and gait of the slave, she hastily tutored the latter to mimic her own; and enjoining short steps, and as economic a display of feet as was practicable, the parties prepared for flight. The building fronted the river, at the distance of about thirty rods from the shore, and the intermediate space was an open field, sparsely studded with trees, which on the side nearest to the settled part of the city drew more closely together, and screened the landscape from any distant observation. The garden which has been named was situated behind the house, and extended back to an unfrequented lane, which, at the distance of some twenty rods southward, communicated with one of the suburban streets of the city.

It was arranged that the negress in her assumed character should

make a sudden exit from the rear of the dwelling, and having thus attracted the attention of the two men who had before challenged her, should dart around the house, and run towards the river, while Blanche, as soon as the sailors had started in pursuit, was to make her escape through the garden and the lane. The approach of the critical moment at first unnerved Miss Montaigne, and seemed to paralyse her powers; but sinking for a moment to her knees to implore the Divine protection, she rose with renewed courage, and followed her companion to the door.

Jule set out with good courage, and at a nimble pace; and, turning the corner of the house, was at once followed, as had been anticipated, by the two bandits from the garden. Scarcely, however, had she proceeded a dozen yards across the common, when she found herself running into the very arms of a third pursuer, who was proceeding to meet her, and whom her blinding veil had prevented her from discovering at a distance. There was no evading the contact, and the negress, raising her bronzed and mallet-like fist, fairly knocked her expecting captor to the ground, and again darted off in a lateral direction. A shout of derision arose from the other conspirators at the discomfiture of their colleague, and, with a single exception, they all joined in the pursuit. Bluff, the leader of the band, was a huge fierce man, who, foreseeing as he thought the inevitable capture of the fugitive, and remembering that there was a slave in the house, who was also to be secured, hastened to execute this part of his fiendish errand.

Blanche, in the meantime, had attempted to escape, but her extreme terror, her awkward dress, and especially her heavy, loose shoes, had been so many impediments to rapid flight. She reached the rear of the garden, but lost some seconds, which seemed like hours, in finding the gate that opened into the lane; and when it was found, the simple latch became intricate to her confused faculties, and she again lost time in finding her way out, which she had only succeeded in doing, when a ferocious shout from the house told

her that she was perceived and pursued. The sound fell like a thunder peal upon her excited nerves: for a moment she moved slowly, and seemed, like the victim of a nightmare, to struggle against invisible fetters, but at the next, she darted forward, not towards the thoroughfare, as she had intended, but, unconscious of her course, in an opposite direction.

The lane extended northward to a field, in which, at a considerable distance west, a farm-house was visible, and towards this refuge Blanche now directed her steps. Despair gave her energy, and when once fairly in progress, she fled almost with the fleetness of the deer; but Bluff had reached the lane at a few bounds, and she heard his clattering feet behind her, and the hoarse imprecations and threats with which he called upon her to stop, seemed uttered almost in her ear. Every instant she expected to feel his grasp upon her shoulder, yet still her fate was suspended. The farm-house was no longer distant, but she felt her strength departing, and her senses failing; fences and trees were flying indistinctly past her, the sky grew dark, the earth was in motion on every side, and now it rose up before her like a wall, and smote her hot forehead, and she lay stretched at length upon its surface, with mingled voices ringing in her ear. How long she thus lay she could not tell; she had not fainted, but was in that half swooning state in which the senses receive but imperfect impressions from the outer world, and give to realities all the wildness of a dream. She did not forget her peculiar peril, but still expected momentarily to feel the clutching hand of her pursuer upon her person, and to be dragged forcibly away.

But a better fate was in reserve. The house towards which she had thus inadvertently fled, proved to be the dwelling of Jacobus Waldron. Huntington, from the window of his study, had perceived the chase, and suspecting something wrong, had snatched his gun, and hastened out to meet the fugitive. A glance at the foremost figure told him it was Jule, the slave of his neighbor Sniff, and

another view informed him that the pursuer was none other than the rude sailor whom he had encountered in the forest. The recognition was mutual; and the pirate, uttering a triple volley of oaths, abandoned the chase, and proceeded to retrace his steps. Though baffled, he thought, in obtaining the negress, the main object of his expedition was secured; and although Grover would be sorely disappointed at a mischance which might reveal his outrage to the public, the slave could not be a witness against him in any criminal prosecution, nor did she personally know anything that connected him with the transaction. Thus consoling himself for his defeat, he hastened to rejoin his companions.

Huntington had seen Mrs. Sniff and Emily driving out of town a few hours before in company with Shiel, and had not doubted that Blanche was also with them; his first decided impression, therefore, was that some piratical fellow had seized so favorable an opportunity to kidnap the slave for the purpose of transporting her on his next cruise, to some neighboring market. Such an event would not be without precedent in those early days of the commonwealth when crime stalked abroad in every shape, and by reason of its frequency and familiarity to the view seemed shorn of half its hideous proportions. Anxious, however, to solve the mystery, although unalarmed about Blanche, Henrich turned quickly to the prostrate figure before him, and touching it not lightly with his gun, bade the slave arise and tell him what had happened.

“Get up, Jule, get up!” he said, “you are safe enough now; stand up quickly, and tell me what is the matter; the poor thing!” he continued, stooping and shaking her roughly by the arm, “thinks she is half way to Virginia by this; *stand up*, I say, you simpleton, I don’t think your delicate nerves are quite shattered yet—stand up!”

Blanche still bewildered, rose with difficulty, half conscious that she was saved, yet ignorant of her preserver, and vainly trying to comprehend the singular language in which she was addressed.

“There, don’t show off any more airs now—you are more frightened than hurt, I assure you,” said Henrich, somewhat harshly.

“Why do you speak to me thus?” exclaimed Blanche imploringly and with tears—at the same time throwing back her hood: “do you not see that I am in distress?”

It was an exceedingly fortunate thing for Henrich that he was not standing at that moment upon some precipice, or beside some terrestrial chasm, into which he could have leaped and buried the burning shame and grief which overwhelmed him, as he saw to whom his coarse reproachful language had been directed.

“Is it indeed you, Miss Roselle?” he said at length, speaking with difficulty; “how,—why do I find you in this disguise? You cannot believe I would have spoken thus to *you*; tell me what has happened, and let me first secure you a refuge, and then avenge your wrongs.”

Blanche, now fully restored to memory, glanced at her servile dress, and smiled faintly as she replied: “I understand it all now; but poor Jule is in danger; she has risked her life for me, and is doubtless at this moment in the hands of the pirates; you look surprised, but I cannot explain now; Heaven has preserved my life by her means—and yours; and something must be done to save her.”

Huntington promised to make every effort to accomplish this object, and hastened to conduct Blanche to his own home for safety, while he should proceed to alarm the authorities, little hoping, however, that so slight an offence as stealing a slave would arouse them to any very vigorous action.

“Do not think me ungrateful to you,” Blanche continued, as they walked hastily along; “my thoughts are still in a tumult of excitement, and if you knew from what a fate the poor African has saved me, you would not wonder that I am anxious for her safety.”

“You give me the best proof that you are incapable of ingratitude,

Miss Roselle," replied Henrich, "when you manifest so great an interest in an humble slave ; but do not be alarmed for the girl—they can scarcely meditate any harm against her, and I hope it will be an easy matter to procure her release."

Blanche was soon under the steep roof of old Jacobus, and in the especial charge of that worthy, who welcomed her very heartily, and made some violent efforts to comprehend the affair, but without any corresponding success. That the stranger was really the serving girl of his neighbor Sniff, turned white with excessive fear, was among the most prominent of his conjectures, but one that seemed open to doubt. Henrich departed on his errand, but not without being reminded by Blanche, with the slightest perceptible change of color, that she was not unreasonable enough to expect him to incur any personal peril in his mission : indeed, that she considered it her duty to protest against his doing so.

CHAPTER X.

“ I saw her hand : she has a leathern hand,
A freestone colored hand.”—*Shakspeare. As you Like it.*

WHEN Jule, after her remarkable pugilistic feat, started anew upon her race, it was, at first, with confused and ill-directed efforts. She found herself “headed off,” to use an expressive phrase, in every attempt to approach any settled quarter of the city; and the nearest dwelling in the direction which she was compelled to take was so remote, as to afford but little hope that she could reach it before being overtaken. She resolved, however, to try; for she was strong and active, and notwithstanding the restraints of her novel dress, made no inconsiderable progress. Her tight, cramping shoes were the principal impediment to speed, and these she resolved to discard; an operation which resulted in a decided expansion of the released members, and enabled them to get, what in the vocabulary of the fancy would be called a better *bite* of the ground. Her speed now visibly increased, and her panting pursuers beheld with astonishment her prodigious exploits both of strength and agility. Nothing seemed to impede her flight; hill and valley were alike easily overcome; if a ditch interposed, Jule went over at a flying leap, and the fences were either passed, in quadrupedal mode, through chinks and gaps, or else were surmounted and bestridden in a manner less elegant than energetic; retaining, withal, many torn trophies from her dress, and holding them up fluttering to the wind.

For a while everything promised success, and her chagrined pursuers, lagging in the chase, strove by loud threats to terrify her into

submission. Little would Jule have heeded threats, but her violent efforts had caused a rapid expenditure of strength; and while her anticipated refuge was yet at a long distance, her speed began visibly to decrease. She could not rally; the pirates gained rapidly upon her, and her capture became inevitable. With ready sagacity, therefore, she readjusted her dress in order to prolong the deception in regard to her person; for she did not, of course, know whether Blanche's safety was yet secured, or whether she had even gained courage to leave the house. She had barely time for this precaution before she found herself in the rude grasp of her captors, who vented many an oath upon her stubbornness, and placing her between two of their number, proceeded to retrace their steps.

Jule did not struggle or speak; all her thoughts were for the safety of Blanche, and her only efforts were to avoid discovery. The party proceeded rapidly to their boats, and in ten minutes were gliding across the water in the direction of a ship, which lay anchored near the opposite side of the river; in a still shorter time, subsequently, the veiled slave was sitting alone and undisturbed in its cabin.

Mr. Boatswain Bluff, meanwhile, had sought out Major Grover, and informed him of the flight of Miss Montaigne, of her capture, and of the escape of the slave; and the major, both mortified and angry at Blanche's continued resistance to his suit, rejoiced at an extremity which would no longer admit of compromise or retraction. He at once accompanied Bluff on board the vessel, listening, meanwhile, with much astonishment to the narrative of Blanche's wonderful exploits, both in pugilism and locomotion.

"She's a Tartar, sir, she is," said Bluff, "begging your honor's pardon; Bill Sweeps' eye, sir, is as good as out, and he ain't any baby to handle either; your honor would do well to be careful how you speak her."

"The most timid of animals will show courage and strength when driven to extremities," replied Grover; "and yet it seems wonderful that even desperation could give power to one so very delicate."

"*Not* so delicate, your honor," returned Bluff, bending to his oars—"she's got a fist, sir——"

"A *fist*, Bluff?"

"Like a sledge-hammer!" said the boatswain.

"You are a fool," replied Grover, "her hand is like a child's, small, white, and dimpled—it could not stagger a kitten—Bill Sweeps must have fallen from mere fright."

"Well, sir, it aint for me to dispute your honor, but seein' is believin', and mayhap your honor 'll see and believe by and by—but *I* say she has a fist—and feet too, that aint no trifles!"

"Her feet are like a doll's—like a fairy's, like a Chinese princess's, small, and of the most exquisite symmetry, and her ancles are like—like——"

"Like a cricket-club, I swear," said Bluff, laughing, "and she made a very liberal display of them, too, in scampering across fields, jumping ditches, and tumbling over fences."

Grover, now thoroughly incensed, was about to reply angrily, but remembering the importance of keeping on good terms with the outlaw, he suppressed his wrath as he best could. Since he had stooped to converse familiarly with his companion, he could scarcely complain that the latter took some license, and even perpetrated a few jokes at his expense. The sailor's propensity for fun, together with a desire to magnify the difficulties of a very simple achievement, was, he was convinced, at the bottom of all his marvellous stories.

"Well, well," he said, "a joke's a joke, and you are welcome to yours; I only wish, since you had your eyes so wide open, that you had managed to capture the wench—it don't speak very well for five strong men that one woman has baffled them altogether, and another almost."

"Fact, sir, fact," replied the boatswain, "that's a disgrace to our flag, that is; Joe Bluff feels it to his fingers' ends, he does, and if your honor wants a wench to wait on the lady, I'll go and pick one up yet, somewhere."

Grover, of course, declined this offer, and as they had now reached the vessel, their colloquy came to a close. Everything was ready for instantaneous departure, the wind was fair, and the major was not disposed to create any delay. He conversed for a few moments with the captain, and while the ship was brought around, he descended into the cabin, and found himself alone with the prisoner. Jule had seen his approach to the ship, she felt assured of Miss Montaigne's safety, and there was no longer any necessity for continuing her deception, yet she trembled for the result of a disclosure, and uncertain how best to accomplish it, sat hesitating, and nearly stupefied with terror, when Grover made his appearance. Her hands, from which, for convenience, she had removed the gloves, were concealed beneath her veil, which was of ample dimensions, and of a favoring hue, and although there was everything in the outline of her figure, and in its general air, to confirm suspicion, when once fairly aroused, there was nothing of itself sufficient to unsettle an existing prepossession. Fatigue, flight, and distress, accounted for everything unusual or awkward, and the well-known curls, fluttering like aspen leaves, with the emotion that shook every part of the poor girl's frame, seemed a proof of identity, equal to a notary's certificate, sealed and stamped.

Grover hastened to address her in a tone of apology and condolence. Her own rash action, he said, had precipitated an event which really need not have occurred, and which he had not anticipated; he was most sorry for any alarm or trouble which it had occasioned her, and hoped everything would be imputed only to the excess of his passion.

"And now," he said, "dear Blanche, let this farce come to an end; only pledge me solemnly your faith, and we will return at once to land, and our wedding shall be celebrated with princely magnificence; I need not urge that you are in my power; that you have no possible escape; that we are bound on a three weeks' cruise, and that when we return, you will no longer have the power

of choice—see, we are even now dropping down the stream!” A sob, and the sound of hurried respiration, were the only reply: an increased tremor shook the frame of the captive, and the little glossy ringlets danced like electrified feathers.

“ You do not speak harshly to me,” continued Grover—“ you will relent—you will not withstand the ardor of a devotion, which has so nearly driven me to madness.”

The chattering of teeth beneath the veil, and a choked and indistinct articulation at length manifested an attempt to reply.

“ Speak but one word of encouragement !” exclaimed Grover, in an excitement of suspense.

“ Boo-oooh-oooh !” exclaimed Jule, crying hysterically, like a child, and with no musical intonation.

“ Rage has no tears,” said Grover, “ and these are auspicious signs—calm yourself, dear Blanche !” Thus saying, he touched with gentlest motion the lace-encircled wrist which lay nearest to him, and sought to draw the appendant hand from beneath the veil.

It came! Was it a serpent with protruded fangs? Was it a Leyden battery, triply charged? or why has the suitor sprung backward from the contact, with a face in which every lineament is wrought to madness,—with ashen lips, that quiver but do not speak, with eyes riveted, as by some horrid fascination, upon the object which he has revealed? Ungloved, the broad, black, bony member lay before him, with its huge knuckles, and the club-like *termini* of its fingers, proclaiming the whole story of his discomfiture and disgrace. It was no dream, no *diablerie*, no freak of a frightened imagination,—but an awful, evident, insurmountable reality, destined to overwhelm him with ridicule unprecedented and unending. Breath, speech, and the power of motion returned at length, and the roar of an unbridled rage ascending to the deck, drew the leading ruffians wondering to the cabin door; the discovery flew from mouth to mouth, until the boisterous merriment of the crew outsounded the tumult below, and for a while defied every attempt at control. The

cabin was at once filled with wide-grinning faces, and the slave, expecting death, yet plucking up spirit, had retreated to the wall, and assumed an attitude of defiance, as with glaring eyes she watched the movements of her captors. Grover, with clenched fists, stood at her side, trampling unconsciously upon his tasselled cap, and incoherently questioning both the prisoner and the crest-fallen Bluff, who, as the leader of the kidnaping expedition, was chiefly chargeable with its failure.

"What devil prompted you to this deceit?" he said fiercely to the former.

"I did it *myself*," said Jule, boldly, "if you kill me for it; Missa Blanche was good to Jule—nobody was ever good to Jule before—and now—and now, I have saved her life, and I'm glad of it."

"You're an idiot!" retorted Grover, stamping with passion, "and you shall be drowned like a rat for your pains—overboard with the chattering baboon!" he continued, turning to the men.

The pirates looked at each other, at Bluff, and at their captain, who, smiling under a hideous mustache, had been, from the background, a silent observer of events. The boatswain, willing to do something towards wiping out his own disgrace, but unused to receiving orders excepting from his leader, stepped forward, and looked to the latter for approval.

"Come, dispatch!" shouted Grover; "we'll show her how to walk a plank with a spring to it—drag her along!"

No one stirred; and Grover, glancing fiercely around the room, caught the eye of the captain, who, coming forward at the same moment, said:

"Major Grover, this ere job wasn't in the agreement at all; and though I aint very squeamish about sich matters, yet it's rather dangerous here in port, and my boys shan't have nothing to do with it—howsomever, major, ef *you* want to drownd the wench—why there she is, and there's the water—nobody shan't interfere!"

"Let him try it!" said Jule, with defiance.

Grover foamed with rage: "Give me a pistol, then!" he exclaimed, turning to Bluff, who handed him one of a pair, which was stuck in his belt; "Stand back there, boys; we'll try the toughness of her hide—stand back!"

But at this moment a shout of "fair play!" rang from one side of the cabin, and a large negro, one of the crew, crowding himself forward, rushed up to Jule, and placed one of his own pistols in her hand;—"fair play!" he said,— "don't shoot the child down like a wolf—if pistols is the word, let 'em both have 'em!"

The movement appealed strongly to the sympathies of the pirates, as well as to their rude sense of justice, and the novelty of the idea was irresistibly attractive. The captain, solicitous for Grover's safety, attempted to interfere, and ordered the slave to be disarmed; but the clamor outsounded his authority, and no one offered to obey, which might indeed have proved a dangerous undertaking. The men fell back to clear a space for the combat, but Grover, declining so extraordinary a duel, had mingled with the retreating phalanx, and quite disappeared from the view of his antagonist.

Still frantic with wrath, he yet had sense to perceive his ludicrous position, and would have needed but little additional goading to cause him to turn his weapon upon himself. He went upon deck, and sought the fresh air, postponing for a few minutes his still determined revenge; but delay brought reflection, and a change of views. He was a bad man, but not bad enough, excepting in the very boiling of passion, to murder one whose only fault had been fidelity to a friend. Perhaps he might still have accomplished such an object if he had persisted in it; but he was heartily sickened of the whole transaction, and asked for nothing but to be quietly put on shore. He made no terms about the negress, never doubting that she would be carried away and sold, inasmuch as the business of slave-snatching was quite profitable, and frequently formed an interlude to the more legitimate pursuits of the pirates.

Captain Snell did not dare, after so bungling a piece of business, as he called it, to return to port, and was compelled to seek some other market for his cargo; he parted with his guest with many apologies, and, mindful that he might yet find the services of the major highly valuable in so growing an emporium as New York, made him heartily welcome to the specimens of silks, laces, etc., which the latter had received, and which, having been left on the premises of Mrs. Sniff, became a windfall of the first magnitude to that lady.

But the worst of men have some human sympathies unseared. The ruffians had been struck with admiration at Jule's whole conduct; her craft and courage especially eliciting their praise. Her fellow African interceded earnestly for her release, and the popular voice deciding it, she was set ashore the same afternoon on the Long Island side of the bay, a few miles south of the city.

CHAPTER XI.

“—He who stems a stream with sand,
And fetters flame with flaxen band,
Has yet a harder task to prove—
By firm resolve to conquer love.”—*Scott.*

WHEN Henrich returned from his fruitless quest after the slave, he found Miss Montaigne still trembling with unsubdued excitement, and fearful that even her present refuge might afford no sufficient protection against her lawless persecutor. She had started at every sound during his absence, and felt as if she were again exposed to all the perils which had so recently impended over her; her fears had been augmented, too, by the remembrance of Henrich's instinctive offer to avenge her wrongs, and she did not hesitate, on his return, to exact from him a promise that he would not seek personally to visit retribution upon the offender: “I have, indeed, a right,” she said, “to require this at your hands; for if gratitude did not prompt a regard for your interest, I cannot but remember that my own security may continue to depend upon yours.”

Huntington replied with suppressed emotion: he was too happy to have been her preserver; her lightest word should be to him a law, and he would leave no vigilance unexercised to secure her continued safety. Such were his words; yet, fearful of seeming to presume on the benefits he had conferred, they were delivered rather with an air of distant respect, than of cordial regard.

The fate of Jule continued to excite commiseration, and Blanche was already engaged in planning schemes to discover her future

place of bondage, and to procure her freedom, when the delighted slave entered the house, bringing the first intelligence of her escape. Emily and Mrs. Sniff were also soon added to the company, panic-stricken by the tidings of the recent atrocity, to which they had so unwittingly been rendered accessaries. Jule, of course, became the lion of the hour, and related her adventures with much minuteness, awakening the deepest interest, and not a little merriment beside; yet poor Blanche, to whom the recital only imparted a more vivid sense of the danger she had escaped, was in no mood for laughter. Indignation succeeded alarm in her breast; and she felt her wrongs the more keenly, when she reflected with what impunity they had been committed. To seek legal redress would be utterly futile: the slave being inadmissible as a witness, there was no evidence to connect Grover personally with the transaction; and even had proof been attainable to set in operation the unwieldy machinery of the law, the offender's rank would shield him from any adequate punishment. Miss Roselle declared she would never again set foot in the dove-cot, and freely accepted, in behalf of herself and Blanche, the tender of a refuge in Mynheer Waldron's hospitable house until a new home could be found. The engrossing subject was discussed until a late hour of the night; and Blanche again and again reiterated her thanks to the gratified slave, and exacted from her a promise to call on the ensuing day for some more substantial token of her regard.

"Sumfin to remember you by, Missa Blanche;—notting else," said Jule, who was unwilling to be thought mercenary.

"It shall, indeed, be something to remember me by, poor child!" replied Miss Montaigne,—“if the priceless boon of freedom is worthy of remembrance.”

"Freedom, Missa Blanche!" exclaimed Jule, with starting tears—“Oh no—dat cannot be; Harry Bolt loves Jule—would marry Jule, if she free; but dat can't be—dat cost two hundred dollars!”

The negress emphasised the last words in a manner that implied

an overpowering sense of the magnitude of the sum named, and a conviction that she had quite put at rest Miss Montaigne's benevolent intentions in her behalf.

"Well, well," replied Blanche, scarcely refraining from tears,—
"come and see me, Jule, and bring Harry Bolt along with you."

To this invitation the negress, after consulting her mistress's eye, and seeing no indications of disapproval, promised compliance. The widow was mortified and vexed by the conduct of her distinguished friends, almost into a state of speechlessness, which, in her case, might be considered the very collapse of grief. She was, however, but little alarmed for her own safety; and being mindful of certain valuables which would be exposed by her absence, she returned to her house, taking with her the reluctant negress and a borrowed farm-dog for her protection.

When Henrich Huntington arose on the ensuing morning he was quite unable to discover his grandfather's old-fashioned rickety house, with its high, precipitous roof, its clumsy chimneys, its loose clanging window-blinds, and its scarecrow weathercocks, which he had long been accustomed to laugh at and ridicule. In its place he saw a venerable edifice, time-stained it is true, but also time-honored, possessing in all its parts an air of the utmost cheerfulness, and challenging his profoundest respect. The declivity of the rafters exactly suited his taste; the chimneys had grown into favor; the iron roosters, if a little scrawny, were still graceful and life-like; and, if here and there a shutter, deprived of a hinge, hung obliquely at its post, he was not sure that it did not improve the general air of the building. The very garden, large and shapeless, had a new, fresh, pleasing aspect; and if its only flowers were the coarse, gaudy hollyhock and the unfragrant poppy, both had a certain peculiar beauty, and the odor of the latter could hardly be called disagreeable.

Whether the presence of Miss Montaigne had anything to do with this transformation, can of course be only a matter of conjecture

Certain it was that she continued to engross a large share of Henrich's thoughts ; and if, with an effort, he banished the beautiful vision as something dangerous to dwell upon, it still recurred in each unguarded moment, to his mind. So the calm lake, broken by some disturbing pebble, loses for a while its image of the sky, but still resumes the picture, with its own returning placidity.

But let him not be blamed, if at times he yielded to this pleasing thralldom, for the charms of Miss Montaigne were calculated to fascinate even a less susceptible mind than that of Henrich. There are no words to paint the singular sweetness of her smile, which seemed like a gleam of sunlight from some inner world of purity and love. Rich in its golden treasures of thought and feeling must have been the heart which emitted rays like these ; and Henrich was but too happy to catch their casual radiance, to treasure them in his memory, to recall them in dreams, and to wonder what there was of human suffering or achievement that could win from relenting Heaven a treasure so transcendent. Never before had his own poverty or obscurity been to him a source of serious regret ; but now he felt that he could make any effort to open the gates of wealth or scale the cliffs of Fame.

Willing to diminish the distance between them, he had tried to discredit the rumor of her rank and wealth, as one which might well have originated in Mrs. Sniff's desire to create a temporary *éclat* for herself ; but there was something in the deportment of Blanche which gave confirmation to the story. An air of unstudied gentility pervaded her movements, with a tasteful avoidance of show and affectation, and an entire freedom from that obtrusive dignity which, ever guarded against aggression, betrays its uncertain footing by its very efforts to stand. The mystery that enveloped her, the singular mode of her arrival, the uncertain duration of her stay, and her voluntary seclusion from society, all added to the interest which she excited in the mind of Henrich ; nor had he failed to observe, in estimating her position, that independent action, even in

matters of moment, which almost precluded the idea of her elder companion being in reality her sister. Her offer to enfranchise the slave was made without consultation with Emily, nor did it seem to excite any surprise in the latter. Henrich did not, indeed, yield a moment's credence to the exaggerated views of his voluble neighbor, yet he was compelled to believe it probable that Blanche belonged to that aristocratic division of English society, between which, and everything below it, so strong a line of demarcation exists.

The accident which had made him her benefactor, while it tended to augment his growing attachment, and to impart an air of romance to its character, seemed, in reality, rather to widen than diminish the distance between them. A chivalric sense of honor forbade the exhibition of a sentiment which might seem to found its claims for reciprocity upon such an obligation, or which might impose any restraint upon Blanche in seeking, in her still dependent state, his fullest assistance and counsel. The proud consciousness that she looked to him for protection was itself a pleasure which he would not lightly jeopard; and he resolved, while sedulously watching her interests, to guard with equal assiduity his own demeanor.

The negress, Jule, did not forget her appointment with Miss Montaigne; and while the latter was discussing with Henrich a subject connected with her welfare, made her appearance, accompanied, according to promise, by her beau. Harry Bolt was a rare specimen of colored humanity. His skin was of that exceeding blackness and coarseness of texture, which, to use a horticultural simile, may be compared to a black turnip; and his coarse woolly hair, from some unknown cause, perhaps by reason of a monopoly of the coloring matter by other parts of the system, had turned white at an unusually early age, and had given him an appearance not very common even among the oldest negroes, and exceedingly rare at the age of twenty-four. He was also very tall and awkward, yet, despite so many disadvantages, could not be called ill-looking, for he had a pleasing countenance, with fine eyes, and a perfect

treasury of teeth. He reached the house in company with Jule, but his courage gave out at the door, and after much shuffling and whispering on the outside, his companion entered alone.

"Harra 'fraid to come in, Missa Blanche," she said; "he say he don't know how to act."

"Never mind, Jule," replied Miss Montaigne: "tell him he need not act at all—bring him in."

Harry accordingly shuffled into the room, looking very sheepish, and with his head hanging down, but he soon became composed enough to listen to the questions of the young lady; and although lost in conjecture as to her design, succeeded in giving very coherent answers. He even confessed to the "soft impeachment" of loving Jule, without any change of color, which, being rather deeply set, would have required a pretty strong emotion to disturb.

"'Taint no use, though," he said, twirling his cap; "'taint no use, unless Missa Sniff die. Missa Sniff haint got any relations, and she promise to give up Jule when she die."

"That is liberal, certainly," replied Blanche.

"Yes, dat berry liberal, sartain," said the negro, quite gravely; "but dat long time fust—last winter she berry sick with fever, and we had some hope, but she come out of it, and now she better an ever; got strong constooshun, Missa Sniff has."

Jule listened on the broad grin to this narrative of disappointed hope; but checking herself, as she thought of her perpetual bondage, she added, sadly, "I told you it could not be, Missa Blanche; Jule can't be free."

"But Harry can work, lay up money, and buy you, Jule?"

"Yes, Missa, he got ten dollars laid up now ——"

"Eleven!" said Harry, triumphantly.

——"But he ony can save three dollar a month, and so it will take six years amost—and dat long time to work for me; I tell him guv me up, and get a free wife somewhere," said Jule, putting the corner of a check apron to her eye; "but he says he wont ——"

"And so I wont!" exclaimed Harry; "what for should I do such a ting as dat; de time will come round byme by; it's ony six more Pinksters, and Pausses, and Christmasses; and I shall be ony forty when de time is up."

"Forty, Harry?" said Henrich; "why how old are you now?"

"I'm twenty-four, Massa Huntington; I speak de trut; not a day older: I shall be twenty-four a fortnight ago to-morrow."

"And in six years you will be forty; will you?"

Harry hesitated and looked at Jule, who seemed also in some doubt, and said she believed it was forty or thirty; but Massa Henrich was a scholar and could reckon it up himself.

"But tell me," said Blanche, "how did you yourself become free, Harry?"

"I tell you dat," answered the negro, excitedly; "my Massa good man, he belong to de church—deacon Bolt, a berry good man—he own me and a plenty more. I tended dat church, swept it, washed it, ring de bell, and dig de graves—dig poor Massa's grave at last, and when he die he guv me to de church in his will—kase he berry good man."

"He was, indeed," said Blanche, smiling; "then *you* belonged to the church, did you?"

"Yes, Missa Blanche," said the negro, grinning; "dat what I tell um—I b'longed to de church—de best white man among 'em didn't b'long to de church as much as I did; but de church folks talked it over and had a meetin' all about it, and frighten me berry much—I didn't know what dey were going to do to me!"

"Well, what *did* they to you, Harry?"

"Golly gosh!" said the negro—"dey said dey wouldn't hab me!—dey turn me out o' de church, and guv me free papers, and paid me ten dollars a year for ringing de bell eber since!"

It need hardly be said that Miss Montaigne was fully prepared to carry out her generous purposes. Although parsimony was not among the faults of the Baron Montaigne, his daughter would

scarcely have felt at liberty, without his permission, to make such an application of the funds with which he had supplied her; but she had, fortunately, a private purse equal to the emergency, which she had saved out of her allowance for pocket-money during the last few years of her abode in England; and over this, at least, her control was complete.

Slaves were not at that day of nearly as great value in the province as they subsequently became; and the price which Jule had named for herself proved to be correct. Mrs. Sniff had long been desirous to sell the girl, and break up her lonely establishment, and no difficulty was encountered in the arrangement, which had already been effected through the agency of Henrich, who had, indeed, but just returned and placed the deed of manumission in the hands of the delighted Blanche, when Jule and Harry arrived. There was a little pause in the conversation, during which Miss Montaigne hesitated how to bestow her boon; and Jule, glancing at Henrich, seemed to suspect that she and Harry might be trespassing by too long a stay.

“Shall we go, now, Missa Blanche?” she said.

“Not yet,” replied the young lady, with emotion, handing, at the same time, the papers to Henrich; “please to explain it to them, Mr. Huntington,” she said in a low voice, turning away her face, and affecting to look for something in her reticule.

“Jule has told you, I suppose, Harry,” he said, “what took place yesterday, and how she saved Miss Roselle from being carried off by the pirates?”

“She tell a-me-all,” said Harry; “sma’at gal, Jule is, and run like an ostridge.”

“Miss Roselle is very thankful to her—she will never forget the favor that Jule has conferred upon her; and in order to do what she can in return, she is going to make Jule a great present, and one that will last for a life-time.”

“Golly!” exclaimed the negro, in whose mind, as in the slave’s,

visions of some new and gaudy dress were floating ; “ golly ! but it must be made of good strong stuff, if it last so long as dat ! ”

“ It is made of paper ! ” replied Henrich ; “ in other words, Miss Roselle has *bought* Jule, and made her *free*—here is the deed ; take it, she is no longer a slave.”

“ Free ?—free ?—free, Missa Blanche ? ” shouted Jule, flinging up her arms as if she were throwing off some imaginary shackles ; “ oh, dat is too much, too much ! oh Missa Blanche, Jule nebber earn dat—oh Missa Blanche, Jule will pray for you, night and mornin’, all her life—all her life ; ” and the poor girl fairly sobbed with emotion.

Harry manifested no less delight, but in a far different way. He did not trust himself to speak in the presence of Miss Montaigne ; but thrusting the paper into his hat, with a sort of hysterical chuckle, he rushed from the house, and uttering a succession of shouts, threw himself upon the grass in the lawn, where he continued to roll for many minutes.

“ And am I really free, like a white woman ? ” said Jule, examining her arms and chest, and looking up and down her figure, as if she expected to see some physical transformation in her person ; “ no more b’long to Missa Sniff, no more work for her—wash, iron, cook, chop wood, make garden, do ebbery ting—no more scold, scold, scold, and call me lazy beast, when I do my best—oh ! Missa Blanche, it is too much—too much ! ”

“ You have fully deserved your freedom, Jule,” said Miss Montaigne, “ and I am delighted that it makes you so happy ; go, now, Harry is waiting for you ; some other time you shall thank me, if you wish.”

Jule accordingly departed, still ejaculating “ Oh, Missa Blanche ! Missa Blanche ! it is too much ! too much ! ”

CHAPTER XII.

“Justice is lame, as well as blind, amongst us :
 The laws, corrupted to their ends that make them,
 Serve but for instruments of some new tyranny
 That every day starts up.”—*Otway's Venice Preserved.*

For a few days succeeding his short sea voyage, Major Grover kept quietly within his own doors, perfectly contented that he did not hear the outer air ringing with derisive shouts at his discomfiture. He denied himself to all visitors, not excepting Shiel and Midge, until the persevering calls of the latter, whose sycophancy was his passport, obtained his admission. Grover did not know to what extent his recent exploit had become public, and notwithstanding his vigilant watch of the words and manner of his visitor, for the purpose of gaining some intimation on the subject, the ensign was careful that he should not be enlightened by any means of his.

Mr. Midge “was sorry that the major had been ill, was a little off the hooks himself, hoped it was nothing serious—but this cursed climate was enough to—to—”

“Yes, certainly, of course,” replied Grover, with an absent look ; “’tis a bad climate, particularly for the gout—but my attack is nearly over now—and—and—any news stirring, Midge ?”

“Not an item,” replied the other, zealously ; “there is a perfect stagnation of gossip—the people have positively nothing at all to talk about.”

This might be considered stretching a point, considering that the

town was actually ringing with the kidnapping affair—though, as usual on similar occasions, without a single correct version of the story being afloat, among the dozens that were current; but it greatly relieved Grover, who being quite ignorant of Jule's escape, now supposed that Miss Montaigne must have kept secret his agency in the transaction. But Midge had gone a step too far; for in his anxiety to disclaim any knowledge of his friend's disaster, he had quite forgotten that he really had important intelligence to communicate.

"I am mistaken, after all," he continued, "in saying there is no news. Cornbury has unpleasant tidings from the north; Seabury and his command have been surprised by the Hurons, and George is now in the hands of Montaigne."

"Lieutenant Seabury a prisoner of Montaigne! this is sad news indeed," exclaimed the major, his countenance lighting up with a gleam of satisfaction, which contrasted strangely with his language—"how have you these tidings?"

"By an Indian express from Albany; the runner came through in two days and reports that the garrison at that place were in hourly apprehension of an attack."

"They need not fear it," replied Grover; "Indians do not often attack forts, and Montaigne dare not venture so far south; this has been done by some outlying band of savages—but how does Cornbury bear the capture of his nephew?"

"As a lioness the loss of a whelp," replied the other; "he raves with wrath—rails at the home government for not keeping him better supplied with troops, but vents his fury chiefly on the French baron."

"Good again!" exclaimed Grover, heedlessly; "but what does he say—what does he say?"

"He says that the Queen's ministers——"

"No—no—no—what does he say of the Baron Montaigne?"

"He says he is a treacherous, crafty, cold-blooded villain; that if

the whim takes him, he will give poor George to the savages to be tortured, and that he would not that any harm should happen to the lad for all New France!"

"Said he so, Midge, said he so?—he is right—Seabury is a noble fellow, and must be protected at all hazards;" and Grover, rising to his feet, traversed the room with an excited air for some minutes, when, turning abruptly to his companion, he continued: "Mr. Midge, will you do me the great favor to carry an immediate message for me to Lord Cornbury, confidential and important?"

"Oh, with the greatest possible——"

"Exactly. I anticipated such kindness; I have had occasion before to acknowledge your valuable services, and shall not forget my obligations—nay, do not speak now, if you please, but listen: go to Cornbury, tell him that I can place in his power, within the next twenty-four hours, such a hostage for his nephew as shall bind the Baron Montaigne by his very heart-strings! Ask him to send me immediate authority for the arrest and safe-keeping of any member of the baron's family who may now be in the province of New York; and tell him I ask no other reward for my services than to be made the custodian of the prisoner. I have reasons for not going personally to Cornbury on this business, and I know that I can place the fullest reliance on your discretion and fidelity."

"You shall not regret your confidence in me, Major Grover," replied the ensign.

"One word more," added the major; "you will understand that I do not desire an interview with the governor, nor to make any explanations; tell him despatch is required, and if he proposes to come and see me, I rely upon you to prevent it; tell him, if you choose, that I am absent from home, arranging the preliminaries of my project. Go now, if you please, and bring me a speedy answer."

The ensign promised everything, and departed, not a little delighted at his embassy, and at being the depository of a state secret.

“This is a rare turn of luck,” continued Grover, in soliloquy; “Cornbury is blind with rage, and will readily assent to my proposition; having once passed his word he will not recede from it, and Blanche Montaigne becomes an inmate of my house! And why should she not? If she is not the ‘captive of my bow and spear,’ the fortune of war has at least thrown her into my hands; Montaigne wages no civilized warfare, and we will hold him in check by what means we can. Women have been hostages before now; and where can the beautiful Blanche be retained with less scandal than in the house of Major Grover?—here are apartments for her use, servants for her attendance, the most respectful, ceremonious, courteous treatment—at least as far as the world will know; and as for the rest—I alone am responsible.”

Grover had not miscalculated the sentiments or actions of Lord Cornbury; the messenger returned, armed with the required warrant, and with a pledge of the fullest compliance with what the governor called the whimsical terms of his friend. The message also enjoined speedy action, and the utmost vigilance to prevent any failure of so momentous and useful an enterprise.

“Seemed he much surprised, ensign?” inquired Grover; “or did he express any doubts of my ability to make good my engagement?”

“He did, indeed, express surprise,” replied Midge, “and also some incredulity; he said it was possible there might have been a disguised son or other relative of the baron among the discharged crew of the *St. Cloud*, but that if so, he had doubtless made good his escape long before this.”

“It is strange, indeed,” said Grover, with an absent air, “that there are men who pass through life with their eyes wide open, and yet fail to see what is passing directly before them;—I do not, of course, mean His Excellency, Mr. Midge!”

“Certainly not,” replied the obsequious ensign.

The young man lingered some time with the hope of receiving some further clew to the project on foot, and was at length delighted

by a request from his companion to call on the ensuing morning, prepared to lend his aid in the undertaking. As this involved an intimation to take his leave for the present, Mr. Midge gracefully withdrew, leaving his companion wrapt in a close-fitting reverie. If the major manifested less haste than Lord Cornbury's injunctions seemed to require, it was because he felt certain that Miss Montaigne had no means of escape; and because the arrangements which he contemplated for her reception required more time than the fraction of a day which was already far on its wane. His house at once exhibited the bustle of an active preparation for the expected guest; and while no accessories of comfort were unprovided, a still more studied regard was paid to decoration. Changes that wearied conjecture employed the astonished domestics, and even some neighboring artisans, until a late hour of the night, while the personal supervision of Grover extended even to the minuter details of their labor.

"I play a sure card at length," he said, "and my triumph may well be graced with a show of magnanimity."

Mr. Midge was not behind the appointed hour in his return on the ensuing morning, yet he found Major Grover impatiently awaiting his arrival, and learned to his great joy that the important commission was to be intrusted entirely in his own hands. But it was with some abatement of his delight, though with unbounded surprise, he learned that the person to be secured was a lady, and a daughter of the renowned Baron Montaigne. There were few laurels to be won in such an enterprise, but there was favor to be gained in high quarters, which was an object of equal importance to him, and he resolved on the faithful and judicious performance of his trust.

Grover was unwilling to be personally an actor in an event, which, in the outset at least, he desired to represent as entirely official, and dictated by principles of state policy. He knew that his motives could not remain unsuspected, but he cared nothing for a public

censure which did not carry the sting of ridicule, and which was not equal to the frustration of his designs. He believed, as has been seen, that his connexion with the recent attempt to carry off Miss Montaigne was not publicly known; and if it should become so, he did not doubt his ability, through his friends and parasites, to give it a coloring which should not reflect seriously to his disadvantage. His success, indeed, in his present achievement was to become subsequently a matter of boast, as an original and brilliant exploit in the annals of gallantry, well calculated to obliterate the memory of any previous failure.

He gave Midge an accurate description of the person of Blanche, and directed him to accomplish his errand with as little publicity as possible, and with all proper courtesy. A carriage was, of course, to be provided for her transportation, and she was to be allowed any reasonable time to make preparations for what was to be represented to her as merely a change of abode. Major Grover was not to be named to her as her custodian, or as being in any way connected with the movement; as he designed that her first knowledge of her felicity in that respect should be derived from himself, and under his own roof. The ensign was to be accompanied informally by a few men, sufficient to enforce his authority; but he was to make no unnecessary exhibition of his force, which was not to accompany the carriage on its return.

With these instructions, which were expected to insure both success and comparative secrecy, the inflated ensign set out upon his expedition, and at an early hour in the forenoon alighted from his carriage in front of the domicile of Jacobus Waldron, while his six followers remained within easy hailing distance. The octogenarian sat quietly smoking his pipe upon his front stoop, to which Midge approached with a pompous air, and, pausing at the entrance, notwithstanding there was no appearance of opposition to his ingress, formally demanded admittance in the Queen's name. Jacobus did not take down his pipe for many seconds, and was still pondering

what answer should be given to so ceremonious a request, when the demand was peremptorily repeated.

"Come in, den, in de Queen's name, ef you want to, young man," he said, at length; "de door is wite open; nobody will hurt you."

Midge accordingly marched on to the stoop, and advancing to the old man, said:

"You are suspected of harboring under your roof Miss Blanche Montaigne, a daughter of the Baron Montaigne, of New France, and I have authority to require you to surrender her into my charge."

"Dere is no such beeples in mine house," said Jacobus, shaking his head.

"We have the fullest proof that she is a resident of your house," replied Midge, "and if she is not quietly given up, I must at once search the premises."

"Dere is no such beeples, I tell you," exclaimed the old man, waxing angry; "dere is noboty but Sally, and Hans, and Doxy, and Ruppy, and de two wenches, and de tog."

The ensign, unwilling to be trifled with, stepped to the outer edge of the stoop, and waved his sword as a signal for his men to advance.

"It is folly to deny Miss Montaigne's presence," he said; "we know that she is here, and she cannot escape us; you will perceive that I have authority for my acts," he continued, exhibiting his warrant; "Anne—Regina—by the grace, etc.,—and there's the seal, and there's the signature—Cornbury."

The old man took the writ, and peered at it with much earnestness for some minutes, occasionally deluging it with an emission of smoke, which concealed every trace of the paper from view, after which he handed it calmly back to the ensign, remarking, as before:

"Dere is no such beeples!"

"Well, sir," said the ensign, still reluctant to take any harsh measures; "here are my men; and although I had hoped to avoid

giving the lady any unnecessary alarm, I must do my duty ; there is not the least harm designed to your guest, and if you will procure me a moment's speech with her, I think I can show her the necessity of a peaceable compliance with my orders—otherwise, remember, sir, that you are guilty of concealing the Queen's enemies, and may have to answer for it with your head."

"I answer mit mine head, now," said Jacobus, shaking that member violently, with a negative gesture ; "I answer no—no—no—dere is no Montaignes, nor no barons, nor no lady Blanches in mine house, now den !"

"Come on, my men !" exclaimed Midge, drawing his sword with a nervous and excited air ; "let these two remain without, to guard the doors, and see that no one escapes ; the rest will follow me—forward, march !" and the ensign led the way into the nearest apartment, which proved to be the kitchen, where the venerable partner of Mynheer Waldron sat knitting in a corner, and two female slaves, desisting suddenly from their labors, stood shaking with fear on the hearth.

"Hey den !" exclaimed the old lady, in a sharp key, and looking up over her spectacles ; "what for do you come trainin' in my house ? isn't der room enough out doors for you, hey ?"

"About nineteen years old—five feet, six inches high—slight in figure—very fair—blue eyes—brown hair in ringlets," said Midge, reading from a memorandum in his hand, and then glancing momentarily around the room ; "She isn't here, certainly," he continued : and without condescending to give any reply to his questioner, he passed on with his followers into another apartment.

The house was by no means a large one, and was soon explored from cellar to attic ; the grumbling Jacobus following close upon the heels of his visitors, and reminding the disconcerted ensign, at every turn, that he had predicted the result. No doors were fastened, no places of concealment visible, and no attempt made in any way to obstruct the search ; yet neither Blanche nor Emily was found.

A buxom granddaughter of Mynheer Waldron was surprised at her toilet, and although she was at once passed by, as not answering to the description, Midge subsequently resolved to make more sure by a closer scrutiny. But there was evidently nothing artificial about the round red cheeks and flaxen hair of Doxy Waldron; and although her plumpness might have owed something to her apparel, there was no such thing as compressing five feet six inches of height into the short squabby figure which stood trembling before the soldiers.

“Let me go if you please,” said the frightened girl—“I’m only Doxy; Miss Blanche Roselle, and Miss Emily, and cousin Henrich _____”

“Shut up your head, youngster! shut up your head!” exclaimed old Jacobus, in the Dutch language and in a loud voice, from the back-ground, where he had been for some time pantomiming to the girl, who under this invocation became suddenly mute; and, notwithstanding all the entreaties and threats of Midge, could not be persuaded to say another word. The Dutch warning was sufficiently intelligible to the ensign by its effects; and after menacing the old man with the punishment of the laws, he resolved on another and still more vigorous search, which was accordingly made, and with a minuteness that could have overlooked nothing larger than a mouse. Like the first, however, it was unsuccessful, and Mr. Ensign Midge betook himself to his carriage, having first directed his men to return to their quarters, by as many different roads as they could conveniently find.

CHAPTER XIII.

"All the forest rings, and every neighboring place,
And there is not a hound, but falleth to the chase."—*Drayton.*

A LITTLE retrogression is necessary to explain the preceding chapter. On the morning of the day in which the convalescing Major Grover tendered his valuable services to the government in obtaining a hostage to be made of Baron Montaigne's heart-strings, Henrich Huntington was reminded by the baying of hounds away over in New Jersey that it was fine sporting weather, and that game of some kind might be expected to be abroad. He had for a considerable time been a stranger to the woodlands, and an unusual longing for the chase came upon him, as he stood looking forestward, and listening to the familiar sounds which came faintly, yet distinct, through the still morning air.

But if he had been far more undecided he could never have resisted the invitation which he presently received from his friend Bounder, who running up and laying his sharp, cold nose in his master's hand, by way of attracting attention, looked wistfully into his face, and then towards the woods, wagging his tail meanwhile, and occasionally uttering a sort of half-suppressed yelp. Bounder said, as plainly as dog could say, that he wanted to go and bury his teeth in the flank of a stag, and that he was in very good wind for that purpose, and that the scent would lie finely, and he would do his duty dogfully.

"Shall we go, Bounder—shall we go?" said the young man, musingly; and his companion, after proving his right to his name

by leaping from the ground, and making several seeming attempts to effect a lodgment upon his master's shoulders, darted forward about forty rods toward the woods, at his topmost speed, and was back again in a twinkling, performing every variety of antics, and answering the distant echoes with his voice.

Henrich entertained, of course, no suspicions of any impending danger to Blanche, who, in the large household by which she was now surrounded, had a sufficient guarantee against any repetition of the lawless attack which she had so recently escaped. Still ignorant of her true name and rank, he could have no conception of the new danger to which she was soon to be exposed, and if it was not altogether with a light heart that he went forth into the forest, it was at least with no fear for the safety of his friend.

But if the day was a favorable one for hunting, it availed but little to Henrich, whose vexed thoughts were themselves winding and doubling in too many directions to admit of successfully following up the track of the cunning fox, or the light-footed deer; and whose repeated blunders in his sport were a matter of very apparent surprise, and even of comment, in his way, to the disappointed Bounder. He had spent several hours in ineffectual labors when he again met the young Indian known by the name of Winny, of whom mention has been made. Winny belonged to a small tribe of Indians, known as the Wappenos, who may be considered the original Manhattanese, but of whom few traces and no representatives have come down to the present day. That they belonged to some subdivision of the Five Nations, is probable rather from their locality, than from any evidence that we have of their warlike character. They were on terms of amity with the English, of whom they stood in no little awe, and whose friendship they cultivated also with a view to a traffic, trifling in amount, yet of much consideration to them. A village, or collection of huts belonging to this tribe, was situated on the western side of the island, several miles north of the city; but there were also two or three isolated wigwams nearer the town, which

frequently swarmed with tenants in the warmer months, but were abandoned in winter for the advantage of contiguity and mutual assistance.

Winy, who had come from this summer residence, and was going in the direction of the Indian settlement when he encountered Henrich, seemed in unusual haste, and manifested no degree of his accustomed alacrity to converse or to give information about the probable haunts of the game. This reserve was the more remarkable, because at his last meeting with Huntington he had been indebted to the latter for the privilege of drawing the bounty on the slain wolf, which was a sum of great value to the savage. It was, indeed, only a remembrance of this obligation that restrained him from being still more unsocial, and from taking an abrupt leave of his companion. Observing the Indian's reluctance to stop, Henrich slightly changed his course and walked with quickened pace by his side, still questioning him on matters pertaining to the chase, and heedless that the other now gave still greater signs of dissatisfaction than before.

"Winy saw deer," he said at length, pointing towards the east side of the island; "going that way—with horns like that!" spreading the fingers of both hands.

"You saw a stag of ten, and did not follow him!" exclaimed Henrich, with a look of incredulity.

The Indian saw that he was disbelieved, and scorning further equivocation, he replied impatiently: "The Panther is going to the council—he must go alone."

"The council, Winy!" said Henrich, who perceived by his companion's air, and by the use of his symbolical name, that he was in earnest; "why this is the first I have heard of a council of the Wappenos in a long time; you have not thirty warriors in your tribe; why do you hold councils?"

"The Wappenos are few," replied the Indian; "once they were

like the leaves ; but they can punish the foe who comes alone in their camp."

"What does this mean?" said Huntington, who began to anticipate one of those scenes of cruelty which were occasionally enacted among the more powerful tribes, but which were of rare occurrence in the neighborhood of the city—"what does this mean, Winny? tell me plainly—remember that I am your friend."

"Henreek is the friend of Winny," was the reply ; "the Panther has no friend among the whites."

"Nonsense!" said Huntington, laughing ; "I am your friend, I tell you, and the friend of your whole tribe, panthers, bears, and all ; did I not send you corn, when the winter was long and cold, and the snow too deep for hunting?"

"You did," replied the savage, grasping the hand of the young man ; "it is written in our hearts—our children know it ; listen, Henreek, but be not like the mocking bird, to speak again—listen, but bury my words in your breast."

Winny proceeded in this metaphorical strain to tell at some length what may be better repeated in simpler language. A Huron Indian, in disguise as a Mohawk, had been found the day before skulking on the island, and seeking to evade observation. Failing in this, he had at first succeeded, by his dress and air, in passing himself off for a Mohawk, and consequently a friend of the English, and of the tribes in their alliance ; but was soon detected by means of some unutterable shibboleth in the language of his assumed tribe. It was to decide the fate of this man that the council was called, and as his sentence would probably be death by torture, the reason of Winny's desire for secrecy became apparent. The English government had several times interposed to prevent similar deeds of barbarity among the tribes on Long Island, and the savages had become exceedingly jealous of an interference with what they considered almost their only remaining act of sovereignty. But the Indian having become thus far communicative, was easily prevailed on to

allow Huntington to accompany him to the village. The popularity of the young man among the Wappenos, and his own influence as a son of a chief, would protect the Panther from any severe censure, and if it became necessary for Henrich to withdraw, the secret, Winny believed, would still be safe.

They were not long in reaching the settlement, which was situated in a partial opening of the forest, where the trees were large and sparsely set, and the ground was free from bushes. The lodges, some twenty in number, stood at the distance of a few rods from each other, on the sides of a sort of hollow square, if that may be called such, which was in reality neither square nor hollow. Within this arena a commotion was already visible, indicative of some important movement: women were assembled in knots at the doors, talking and gesticulating, some sitting and some standing, while half clad children were running around in glee, stopping occasionally to peep through the chinks of a closed and guarded shanty, and holding up small bundles of fagots to the view of its inmate, by way of a foreshadowing of his fate.

The warriors were assembled in and about the principal lodge, wearing, in general, an air of great gravity; yet some of the younger braves were giving way to occasional turns of merriment or exultation, without reproof. The Panther and Henrich went directly to this council-hall, where the latter was at first eyed with much suspicion, but was soon generally recognised and welcomed.

"He is our brother—he is welcome," said the principal chief; and the young men made room for him beside themselves on the grass, while Bounder, after coursing the enclosure, and looking curiously into several of the lodges, threw himself panting at his side.

The council was soon opened within the wigwam, those entitled to a voice in its proceedings ranging themselves decorously in order, while those without awaited the result in silence. There was some division of sentiment, and more than an hour elapsed before the

opinions were all delivered ; but the result proved the predominance of a sanguinary spirit among the judges. The Huron was sentenced to run the gantlet, and, if he escaped that ordeal, to subsequent torture and death. He was at once brought out upon the square to receive intelligence of his doom, which he heard in silence, and with the affectation of indifference usual to his race on such occasions ; but a close observer could easily detect in the forced compression of his lips, and in the slight flaring of his nostrils, the signs of mental emotion. He was a tall, well formed man, of about thirty years, with features which would have been far from ugly, separate from their mask of paint, and with an eye, more especially, which would have redeemed a still greater disfigurement of face from being wholly loathsome. Its iris, bright, black, and large, rolled around its little orbit with a rapid motion, seeming to drink in everything within the scope of its vision ; while not only the head, but the muscles of the face, remained unmoved.

Henrich had resolved to make an effort to prevent the threatened tragedy, but he knew that the savages were jealous of their prerogative, and that if he could succeed at all, it would be only by the utmost tact. To interfere with the deliberations of the council would give the greatest offence, and diminish the chance of his subsequent influence. He even resolved not to object to the execution of the first part of the sentence which was more formidable in sound than in reality, and which never resulted fatally, to a man of the least courage ; it was intended, indeed, rather as an intimidation than a punishment, although it often resulted in severe and sometimes in mortal wounds. A view of the athletic, compact, sinewy frame of the Huron convinced him that the latter would come off nearly unscathed from the ordeal, and the very fact of his being also doomed to the stake would prevent a desire on the part of his captors to terminate his life in the first instance. It was of course with great reluctance that Huntington resolved to behold the approaching spectacle, but believing that the best interests of the prisoner required

such a course, he determined to remain as yet a silent observer of events.

The scene which ensued may be briefly described. The Wapenos, men and women, and many of the larger children, armed with knives, clubs, and sticks, of various kinds, ranged themselves in two parallel rows, terminating at one end in front of a lodge, the door of which stood open, and leaving between the lines a space of about ten or twelve feet in width. All who chose were at liberty to take a place in the ranks, and but few of the adults, excepting those who were physically incapacitated, refused to avail themselves of the privilege. There were indeed several squaws, who stood aloof, mingling, as spectators, with the children, and the principal chief also remained inactive, occupying a convenient post of observation at one end of the line. Henrich was offered a club, and invited to take part in the performance, and but for the irrepressible signs of abhorrence with which he declined, would doubtless have been importuned to comply.

When everything was ready, the Huron was brought forward and unbound, his eye, meanwhile, running rapidly over the ranks, as if estimating the danger and discovering the most perilous localities. The task before him was to run through this alley, between these living walls, in such manner and with such speed as he chose, but through he must go, and while all his foes were privileged to inflict upon him such blows as they could deal while he was passing, none was permitted to stir out of his place in pursuit. No dexterity or feint of the prisoner, and no manœuvre, in the way of dodging or doubling, were exceptionable ; his only task was to reach the opposite end of the line with as much impunity as possible.

The signal was given and the Huron started like an arrow from the string. The first dozen of his foes struck only the empty air in his path, and the clubs of the next whizzed idly above his head. He was now stooping to the earth, and now bounding in the air, at one breath on one side of the line, and the next on the other, twisting,

turning, gliding, crawling, and almost defying the pursuit of the eye, much more the hasty and ill-directed blows of his eager enemies. About half way down the lane the ranks were chiefly occupied by boys of from twelve to fifteen years, and having reached this point with but little injury he paused a moment to take breath, bearing meanwhile with little regard, the furious pummelling of the children. In the interval beyond, were some of the most vigorous and expert of his enemies, including the vigilant Panther; and although, discerning their position at a glance, he started forward with increased wariness and skill, it was not with a success equal to that which had hitherto attended him. He received several severe contusions, was once nearly stricken to the earth, and when he at length reached the refuge lodge, was bleeding from a number of superficial wounds.

A little noisy discussion next ensued among the Wappenos on the subject of their respective successes and failures in their recent pastime, which seemed to be regarded somewhat in the light in which a game at cricket is viewed by the young men of civilized life, after which active preparations were at once commenced for the closing tragedy. Henrich drew curiously near to the Huron, about whom the leaders of the savages had assembled, and for the first time caught the eye of the prisoner, which, as it rested for a moment upon his own, and then glanced hastily at the growing pyre without, had a mournful and appealing expression, sufficient to counterbalance a thousand proofs of stoicism. The Indian clung to life, he shrank from the awful change; he quailed before the instruments of torture. Young, active, and vigorous, he was but yesterday free as the mountain air, free to traverse the boundless forests, and glide over lake and river, with his light canoe, with half a century's lease of life stretching in bright perspective before him—and now, he was a captive in his enemy's camp, listening to the sound of whetted weapons, preparing for his own immolation,

and recalling to memory by word and cadence the death-song of his tribe.

Stimulated by the silent appeal of the Huron, Huntington at once began the work of intercession; but it was only to meet with frigid looks, and with answers of surprise and displeasure. The response, indeed, was unanimous against clemency, and the Indians even manifested impatience at an interruption, which delayed their anticipated sport; for, as Henrich became importunate, the wondering savages had crowded around him, until, the work of preparation being temporarily abandoned, even the women and children had mingled with the curious throng.

"The words are said!" exclaimed the senior chief, alluding to the voice of the council; "they are gone into the air, and cannot be found again—the Huron must die!"

A general murmur of approval followed this decision, in which, as Henrich observed with foreboding, even his friend, the Panther, joined. He next tried to effect a ransom; and although able to give but little which could gratify the cupidity of so many, he was careful to offer such things as would appeal most to their peculiar wants: his rifle, a dozen canisters of powder and half as many kegs of the enticing fire-water were offered, and, strange to say, were all refused. Henrich knew nothing more that he could do. The dialect of the Wappenos, in which he had spoken, possessed sufficient resemblance to the language of the Hurons to be intelligible to the prisoner, as was proved by the look of gratitude which the latter bestowed upon his young friend; but there was at the same time an expression of hopelessness in his features, which showed that he understood better than his advocate the character of the enemies with whom he had to deal.

Among those who had pressed to the front of the throng, sifted, as it were, through the interstices, were some half-clad children, among whom, at this juncture, a sudden quarrel ensued, for the possession of something which had been found on the arena

recently traversed by the flying Huron, and which at once attracted general attention. As it passed from hand to hand among the Indians, it soon took shape, to the eyes of the astonished Henrich, as a sealed letter, bearing a superscription; but how was his amazement increased, when at length obtaining possession of it in his turn, he read the endorsement: "To Father Ledra, or the Misses Roselle, in the city and province of New York." He remained gazing long and steadfastly at the writing, marvelling what new and unrevealed mystery, in regard to Blanche, was about to be evolved; and on again looking up he saw that the prisoner's eyes were fixed upon him with an intelligent and steady gaze.

"Does it speak to you?" asked the senior chief, who with his companions had closely observed Henrich's surprised air; "does it talk to our brother, and what are its words?"

"It speaks!" replied Huntington, solemnly, "and its words are many; it says that the Huron was not upon the war-path when he came into the camp of his enemy; that he did not come looking for the scalps of the Wappenos."

"Huh!" exclaimed the chief, who, in common with his race, entertained no conception of the art of conveying ideas by writing, and looked upon written language, of which he had heard something among the whites, as a production of magic; "huh!" he exclaimed, sarcastically; "ask it why then the Huron has come, if not for scalps; is there no game in the forests of the north?"

"It says," replied Henrich, "that far away by the bright lakes, an old man weeps for his daughters, who are captives of your English father in New York; and that he will listen long for the feet of the swift runner, and for his voice to tell him that his children are yet alive."

"He *will* listen long," replied the unmoved chieftain, "if he waits for the false Maqua, who came to Manahatta, with the face of a Mohock, and the heart of a Huron—does it say anything else?"

"It says nothing more," replied Henrich, sadly, yet earnestly; "but

there is a voice from the Great Spirit, which speaks to you, old man, and forbids this horrible sacrifice—which says, ‘Shed not innocent blood:’ which says that the happy hunting fields will be closed to the cruel and revengeful man.”

“I do not hear it!” answered the chief, looking upward for a moment, and then turning slowly away; “the words of our white brother are too many: wise men speak but once.”

Henrich was about to make a final appeal by largely increasing his offered ransom, when he felt himself pulled suddenly by the sleeve, and on looking down he saw a pair of glowing eyes fixed intently upon him, and slowly receding at the same time into the depths of the crowd. As he gazed, he gradually recognized the features of an Indian, known as the Weasel, whom he had frequently met in the city, and who now evidently desired to make some private communication to him. He was celebrated among his brethren as an orator; but was, in reality, a wordy, windy, sham patriot, exceedingly fond of intoxicating drinks, and indulging in his favorite propensity to a shameless extent, whenever a favorable opportunity occurred. As the general attention became at once engaged in the renewed preparations for the Huron’s death, Henrich found no difficulty in following the Weasel and obtaining an interview with him.

The Indian had a proposition to make, which, divested of its parade of words, amounted to this; that his own heart was touched by the condition of the unfortunate captive, that he remembered with gratitude the former services of Henrich to his tribe in the time of famine, and that he would undertake to bring about the release of the Huron for the ransom which had been offered, and for one additional keg of rum for his private benefit. Henrich caught with avidity at this offer, improbable as it seemed of fulfillment.

“But how,” he said, “can you do this? did you not give your voice for the prisoner’s death, and advocate it with a speech?”

"I did," answered the Indian; "but my mind has turned over," turning his hand, by way of illustrating his meaning; "I will turn my brothers' too."

The orator entered at once upon his task. He took his position upon a slight eminence near the centre of the square, and commencing an energetic address, at once drew around him the gratified savages, who, knowing what had been his views and vote in council, anticipated only an inflammatory exhortation to persevere in their design, and, perhaps, a suggestion of some new and ingenious varieties of torture. The Weasel knew well the disappointment which he was about to create; and he approached his subject carefully, and from a remote position. Only gradually unfolding his design, he fortified his premises by earnest and impressive appeals, while his hearers were yet uncertain of the conclusion to which they tended. He spoke of the famine from which they had suffered, and described by word and gesture the hollow cheeks and shrivelled limbs of themselves and their children; he told of their inability to procure food, of their unwillingness to beg in the great city, of an old warrior who had sung his death-song in his empty cabin—and finally "brought down the house" by a suddenly drawn picture of the good Henrich appearing in their midst, with a sleigh-load of yellow maize.

"Look around you," he said, "and you will see the tracks of his horses, just where he stood but now, when you stopped your ears to his prayers."

The mortified Wappenos showed that they felt the indirect taunt of the orator, who still refrained from any avowal of his design: when, at length, however, he declared it, he saved himself from the charge of inconsistency by professing not to have known at the time of giving his voice against the captive, that their benefactor desired his release. He dwelt briefly upon the peculiar mission of the Huron, as one which entitled him to clemency, and did not fail to dilate temptingly upon the ransom which Henrich stood ready to give;

he spoke, indeed, of everything connected with the affair, with the exception of his own promised counsel-fee, and on that subject, he maintained a discreet silence. He closed his remarks with a forcible and effective peroration, reminding his brethren that the council doors were still open, and that they should be glad that the opportunity yet remained to retrace their steps, and wipe out the stain of ingratitude from their character.

Henrich watched with much anxiety the countenances of the auditors, and was rejoiced to see the signs of general relenting. The judges, at the instigation of the Weasel, returned formally to the lodge where they had sentenced the prisoner, and after a little deliberation, revoked their former decision, with but a few dissenting voices. Henrich received the tidings with the greatest exultation, which he manifested by shaking hands with the whole court, and, finally, with the Huron, to whom he had the pleasure of bringing the first news of his freedom.

It was difficult to convince the captive that he was really discharged; and it was not until in company with Huntington he had left the camp of his enemies, that he could believe himself at liberty. His delight was evidently extreme, although it was manifested less in language than in looks and manner. He resigned himself implicitly to Henrich's guidance, who returned to him his lost packet, and undertook to conduct him at once to the persons to whom it was addressed. It would have been an easy matter at that moment to win from the confiding Huron the whole secret of his errand, and its author, and thus to solve to some extent, the mystery which enveloped Blanche; but Henrich was incapable of taking such an advantage of his position. To induce the savage to violate his trust, or to penetrate by any means a secret which his friend was desirous to conceal, was an act repulsive to his sense of duty; and although an unbounded curiosity pervaded his mind to know the origin and tendency of the Indian's mission, he conducted him, unquestioned, to his own home. There

he at once obtained an interview with the ladies, introduced to them his companion, as one who was seeking their presence, and having learned that although much amazed, they were not afraid to be left alone with the messenger, withdrew, and left the Huron to tell his own story.

His forbearance and delicacy were rewarded by a speedy summons to return to the ladies, and aid them with his counsel in a new and important emergency.

CHAPTER XIV.

“We are alone ;
But how I should begin, or in what language
Speak the unwilling word of parting from you,
I am yet to learn.”—*Massinger.*

“WE are compelled, Mr. Huntington,” said Blanche, rising with an excited air, as Henrich entered the room, “to make you the depositary of a few secrets, which, if they were ever important, will cease to be so when we are gone.”

“Gone !” answered Henrich, with astonishment,—“whither?—by what means? surely, Miss Roselle, you are not in earnest——”

“We are summoned,” replied Blanche, interrupting him, “by one who has the right to control our movements, and who doubtless has properly provided for our safety. But I will explain all: you are already acquainted with some of the circumstances connected with our accidental arrival in this city—the shipwreck of the *St. Cloud*—the singular escape of one of her passengers, and the subsequent banishment of our friend and protector, Father Ledra.”

“I know the whole sad story,” said Henrich; “the fugitive, of whom you speak, was the haughty and powerful Baron Montaigne; the friend and counsellor of Louis; the man by whose courage and diplomacy with the Indian nations, the whole tottering government of New France has long been upheld—whose craft and cruelty have——”

“Mr. Huntington is speaking of my father,” rejoined Miss Montaigne, with quiet dignity.

Amazement for a while held the young man silent; and when he again spoke, it was with the apology that the occasion seemed to require.

"The picture is drawn by his enemies," he said, "and we may easily suppose that it is not impartial: I can believe nothing ill of the father of Miss Blanche Montaigne."

"The packet which we have received," continued Miss Montaigne, "I need scarcely say, is from him; but it has been prepared with reference to the contingency of falling into other hands than ours, and contains, therefore, no explicit information. A few words without a signature, but in penmanship which is familiar to me, instruct us to trust ourselves with implicit confidence to the protection of the bearer,—a Huron Chief, called the Lynx,—and whom we are to know as genuine by his knowledge of us. We have not yet proved him; because feeling the importance of avoiding any error on so vital a point, we dared not rely upon our own judgment alone: Emily has frightened me with a horrible supposition that the true messenger may have fallen into the hands of foes, who have obtained his credentials, and now seek to decoy us into their power."

"Too much caution cannot be used where everything is at stake," replied Henrich, with a saddened air; "I think I have already sufficient proof that the Indian is a Huron—yet we will leave nothing to conjecture; but how is he accompanied? where is his force? and what are his means of conveyance? You surely will not confide yourselves to the charge of a single man, however trustworthy?"

"It is not probable that we are required to do so," said Blanche; "but we know nothing as yet—the savage seemed suffering from fatigue and hunger, and is now partaking of your grandfather's hospitality; he will rejoin us in a few minutes, and we trust to you to interrogate him as to all the particulars of his mission."

She had scarcely ceased speaking when the Huron stalked silently into the room, and answering an invitation to be seated by

a graceful wave of the hand, remained standing erect and dignified, and seemingly awaiting his expected examination. Henrich was familiar with the abrupt and sententious style of colloquy used by the Indians, and naturally adopted it in conversing with them; he addressed the stranger in French, which the latter, like many of his northern brethren, spoke with tolerable correctness.

“My brother comes with a talking paper,” he said; “can he tell us what it says?”

“It talks to *her*,” answered the Huron, laying his hand lightly on the head of Blanche, “and to her,” pointing to Emily, “and to an old man, with long white hair—I do not see him: it talks to them, not to me; I have listened, but cannot hear it.”

“Whose are its words?” asked Henrich.

The Indian’s countenance brightened and assumed a loftier expression as he answered: “they are the words of my cousin, the great general—the Baron Montaigne—the King of the Hurons; and this,” he said, again touching the head of Blanche—“this is his daughter.”

“And this?” asked Henrich, pointing towards Miss Roselle.

“Is his sister’s child—I have said—I have but one tongue, and it is not forked.”

“Yonr words are true,” replied Henrich, “we receive them into our hearts; yet tell us of this Baron Montaigne: what is he like?”

“He is a great Brave,” said the savage, with an air of unbounded admiration—“bold as the grizzly bear—quick as the elk—with eagle’s eyes—tall, large, straight as the oak—I cannot speak him.”

“It is enough!” exclaimed Blanche, offering her hand frankly to the Huron—“you are our friend; tell me,” she said, with an affectionate interest, which showed that desertion and neglect had not chilled her filial love—“tell me, is my father well?—did he—did he speak kindly of me?”

The Indian answered only: “He is well;” and Blanche turned

aside to hide the gushing tears which told how bitterly she was disappointed.

The remaining part of the messenger's story was soon told : he was one of a company of seven, who had descended the lakes and the Hudson river in canoes, and who, passing the few settlements and exposed places always under cover of the night, had reached the vicinity of New York without molestation. There had been, indeed, no recent active hostilities between the French and English at the time of the setting out of this expedition ; and as far as Montaigne could learn from his vigilant runners, there were no Indians on the war-path, in that part of the territory of the Five Nations which it would be necessary to traverse. These circumstances, in connexion with the almost uninterrupted line of water communication for the whole route, and the width of the river and lakes, which would permit of avoiding an enemy on either side, were supposed to render the proposed journey of the ladies reasonably safe, in an age and country in which human life was never abundantly secure. It was rather the hardships than the perils of the undertaking which formed its chief objection ; but these Miss Montaigne resolved cheerfully to encounter, when once assured that her father deemed it prudent, and that his agents were fully reliable.

But her surprise and curiosity were not a little excited when she was informed by the Huron that the party was under the command of one Count Carlton, a young French officer, and an intimate friend of the baron, a piece of intelligence which went far to reconcile Emily to the journey. To her imagination, which no remembrance of past events could wholly correct, it began to assume the character of a romantic enterprise, in which nothing was wanting to increase its attraction but the certainty of being pursued by a party of those delightful Mohawks, all of whom were to be slain by their gallant champion, the young French count. The name fell ominously upon the ear of Henrich, who already pained beyond expression at the prospect of Blanche's departure, at once foresaw, with a lover's

instinct, the danger which threatened most to his happiness. Alive, however, to every incident, he did not fail to observe that the Huron spoke of his commanding officer with a scowl that seemed to indicate displeasure, and that he did not designate him as a Brave, or apply to him any of those terms by which the savage so freely expresses his admiration of all noble qualities.

The count, with the remainder of his small detachment, of whom four were French soldiers, and the other an Algonquin Indian, was encamped in the forest about ten miles north of the city, where a small creek, connecting with the river, afforded a safe hiding-place for his boats. The Huron had left the encampment early on the morning of the preceding day, and it became important that no further delay should occur, lest Carlton should withdraw his men, and abandon the expedition, under the impression that his messenger had fallen into the hands of the enemy. The Huron, indeed, urged that they should depart on that very evening, and as Miss Montaigne, though pale with emotion, did not hesitate to assent, the bustle of a hurried preparation at once ensued, and before it was yet sufficiently dark to set out, the ladies were both in readiness.

Henrich, whose aid was of course volunteered to accompany them to the camp, had in the meantime procured a boat and despatched it in charge of a slave to await the party on the shore of the river, a little north of the city wall, but there was at the same time something in the character of his arrangements which indicated a view to some ulterior purpose. Miss Montaigne, who had contemplated with dread a perilous night-walk through the forest, was delighted at the comparatively easy means of travel which had been provided, and something like a gleam of cheerfulness began to illumine her features, as the moment for departure approached. It was in vain, however, that she sought to conceal her trepidation, and she seemed to seek a re-assurance for her failing courage in the language and bearing of Henrich. He would have rejoiced at the lightest intimation from Blanche, that his services would be accept-

able as one of her guard through the whole of her anticipated journey, and only dared not make the offer, lest its refusal, founded on the suspicion of his daring love, should involve, by implication, a rejection of his suit, and extinguish for ever the flickering light of hope, which served now at least harmlessly to irradiate his heart. There was something in the romantic character of his attachment which admitted of his gathering bliss even from an acknowledged illusion, as long as it did not transcend the limits of possibility, but he had not courage to face the reality of a present and certain despair.

"We look to you, Mr. Huntington," said Miss Montaigne, "to infuse a little courage into us before we part; confidence, you know, is ever inspired by example, and you are really looking as if you boded evil."

Accident had left them a moment alone, and Henrich replied with a smile—"You must allow me to be a little dismal at the prospect of losing the companionship of yourself and your cousin and falling back upon the Wappenos, and wolves for society. Your escort, I hope, is safe; it is doubtless such as will best secure secrecy and celerity of movement; yet I could have wished it somewhat stronger."

"Do you think there is much danger?" asked Blanche, quickly.

"With vigilance, prudence, and valor, on the part of your guard, no;" said Henrich, "and we must presume they have been selected for qualities like these; yet I would that you felt sufficiently insecure to permit of my offering to enrol myself among your defenders."

Blanche slightly colored as she replied, "We are already laden with obligations to you that we cannot requite, and although I cannot deny that it would add greatly to my sense of security——"

"It would!" exclaimed Henrich, laughing; "then say not another word, Miss Montaigne; it is a charity to give occupation to an idle man, and I have really nothing else in the world to do: I think, too, that grandfather Waldron will gladly be rid of me for a few weeks."

"You cannot blind me thus, Mr. Huntington," said Blanche,

“to the magnitude of the favor which you offer, nor to the privations and probable peril which it would cost you.”

“The school of danger is one in which I need a few lessons,” answered Henrich, gaily; “and as to privations,” he continued, lowering his voice, to escape the ear of Miss Roselle, who re-entered the room at that moment, “Miss Montaigne’s permission to accompany her will postpone for a while the only evil of that nature which has any terrors for me.”

Henrich withdrew from the apartment as he concluded speaking, and proceeded to complete his preparations, not forgetting to provide for the liquidation of his debt to his forest friends, the payment of which involved the loss of his favorite rifle. It became necessary to procure a substitute for this weapon, and he was fortunate in obtaining one of tried worth, which had acquired a wide celebrity, even in less skilful hands than those by which it was in future to be wielded. The party set out about nine o’clock in the evening, accompanied by a few slaves, who transported to the boat some light but necessary stores, and brought back intelligence to Mynheer Waldron and his household that the travellers were safely embarked. Leaving them to pursue their nocturnal voyage, we must precede them to the camp of Count Carlton, and take a hasty survey of its inmates and their condition.

CHAPTER XV.

“What the d—l should move me to undertake the recovery of this drum ; being not ignorant of the impossibility, and knowing I had no such purpose ? I must give myself some hurts, and say I got them in exploit.”—*Parolles in “All’s Well that Ends Well.”*

LOUIS CARLTON had not failed in making good his resolution to visit Castle Montaigne, on the invitation of its proprietor, extended to him, as has been seen, when the baron was about visiting Europe. He had not seen fit, however, to wait for the return of the latter, believing that if delays were ordinarily dangerous, they were peculiarly so in the prosecution of such delicate missions as that on which he was now bound. The baron was rich and powerful and had an only daughter at home, whom he had fairly offered to the count—such, at least, was Carlton’s understanding of the affair, and Governor Vaudreuil might laugh his fill at the idea of his nephew wedding a maiden upon whose escutcheon a bow and arrow might properly be emblazoned ; yet if the heiress was at all attractive in person, he had resolved not to be driven by ridicule from his design. In the *salons* of Paris, the descendant of a Huron prince might expect rather to derive a lustre from her ancestry than to find it a subject of reproach ; and with Wealth and Beauty for auxiliaries, and the advantage of the count’s reputation, which, although a little shattered, was still potent in his own estimation, he did not doubt she would win the *éclat* of the fashionable world. All his fears had been that Myrtle would prove to partake too strongly of the Indian characteristics of countenance and demeanor ; but on these points he was destined to be most agreeably disappointed.

He was welcomed at the castle, where he introduced himself as a friend of the baron, and soon attained a degree of no little intimacy with its inmates. His gay and pleasing manners were attractive to Myrtle, and even won many a smile of approval from the reserved and diffident baroness, while both were astonished to receive so many marks of attention and kindness from a stranger of distinguished appearance. He became the companion of the daughter in her rambles and sports, and put his invention to task in devising new varieties of pastime for her amusement; and instead of finding, as he had feared, only the glimmerings of beauty and grace in her person, he was continually compelled to accord to her unstudied charms the tribute of admiration.

The baroness, little accustomed to deference, beheld his courtesy towards herself with ill-disguised astonishment; but his apparent kindness to her child entirely won the heart of the Huron mother. Myrtle knew not how to understand the addresses of the stranger; but artless and truthful herself, she could think no ill of a man whose whole endeavor seemed to be to contribute to her enjoyment.

Affairs at the castle were in this position, when the baron returned, not a little pleased to believe that Carlton's eagerness to meet Miss Montaigne had induced him to anticipate her arrival by his visit. He hastened, therefore, to explain to his guest the accident which had separated himself and his daughter, and which had left the latter almost a prisoner in New York, while the very extremity of the count's amazement alone prevented him from betraying his own extraordinary mistake. That there was another daughter of Montaigne, exclusively of European origin, was a fact, which now for the first time became known to him; and he shuddered to think how nearly he had committed himself to the forest maiden, while the favored child and prospective heiress, a lady of unsullied birth, of rank, education, and perhaps even beauty, had been indirectly offered to his alliance.

No time was to be lost in rectifying so gross an error; nor did

he feel the lightest scruple at deserting Myrtle, by reason of any consequences which might ensue to her. If he had won her heart, which the quick discernment of vanity plainly perceived, it had been with no open profession of attachment; and he knew too well the humility of the mother, and the timid modesty of the daughter, as well as their ignorance of the conventional usages of civilized life, to fear that they would ever make his conduct the subject of complaint or reproach. He became elated with his new anticipations; and as he contemplated in perspective the sunny path of prosperity which seemed to stretch far away in the future, he forgot his past reverses, and gained an augmented sense of his own importance.

But it was with little pleasure he reflected that before Miss Montaigne could be converted into a bride she was to be rescued from captivity; and while he waited to learn the baron's plans for effecting this object, the latter remained in daily expectation of an offer from his guest to engage personally in the enterprise. Carlton was a soldier only in name; he had seen no service, yet he had not failed to make his martial reputation indirectly the subject of boast before the baron, in whose estimation he knew that military talents transcended every other quality. Of Indian warfare he had an exceeding dread, and while affecting a soldier's contempt for every danger, he could not divest his mind of the terror inspired by the contemplation of ambuscades, bush fights, and midnight onsets accompanied by the usual accessories of savage war. He was in short a coward, with a coward's usual bravado, but he soon found that there was no middle course of action to pursue if he would retain for a moment the confidence of Montaigne.

The baron disclosed to him his plan for the rescue of his daughter, and the very flashing of his eye told the alarmed count that he expected him not only to take command of the expedition, but to accept the post as a most distinguished favor. Hesitation would have been as disgraceful as refusal, and Carlton, practised in dissimulation, promptly begged the command with every appearance of

earnestness, trusting to expedients for still escaping the danger, if before the time for setting out he should not become satisfied that it was really trivial.

Several weeks elapsed before the baron deemed it prudent for the party to start, and during this interval, Carlton took every opportunity, by indirect means, to gain a knowledge of the extent of the perils to be encountered, resolving if they proved too alarming, to avoid them by summoning himself suddenly back to Quebec or even to Paris, if necessary, on business of the last importance. As such a course, however, would be open to suspicion, and would doubtless terminate his prospects of winning the hand of the heiress, it was only to be resorted to in extremity, while, if the risk was but light, he resolved to face it for the sake of the prize in view, which he thought would be made doubly sure to him by his seeming valor. The Lynx, with whom his opportunity to converse was not infrequent, and who was to occupy a command second to himself in the party, spoke with unfeigned contempt of the danger, and the soldiers, who were detailed for this duty, not lacking the spirit of gasconade incident, at that day, to their profession, were equally boastful of the safety with which their object was to be accomplished.

The ultimate choice of the count has been seen, but the details of his ill-disguised pusillanimity, during the descent to New York, as they are not directly connected with the narrative, need not be described. It was sufficient to win for him the scorn of the Huron chief, but the spirit of discipline, which had been sedulously inculcated by Montaigne among his Indian allies, had induced the former not only to forbear comment upon the conduct of his superior, but to yield to him such a ready obedience as the count imagined could only proceed from the utmost confidence in his own judgment and military skill. His movements had, notwithstanding, been silently influenced to a great extent by the Lynx, and it was owing to this circumstance that he had succeeded in reaching the island of Man-

hattan in safety, although, of course, with wonderfully augmented views of his own prowess and wisdom.

Whatever Count Carlton was in conceit and vanity at Castle Montaigne, that he was in a quadrupled degree in his little cavernous camp on the bank of the Hudson, where he became impatient of no inconvenience more than of the deprivation of a fitting auditory for the story of his achievements. Yet the prolonged absence of the Huron gradually awakened his alarm, and when the shades of the second evening were setting in without the return of the messenger, his apprehensions became extreme. If the Lynx was a prisoner, not only was his whole design frustrated, but his own position could not long be safe, for however incapable the Indian might be of betraying his friends, the letter which he carried would reveal the fact that he had coadjutors somewhere in the vicinity of the city.

But he would not entertain so unwelcome a belief, and having sought counsel of no one, he little dreamed how great was the probability of such an event having occurred. He stood looking gloomily from his sheltered retreat upon the adjacent river, and the Algonquin, with quick watchful eye, loitered at his side, evidently courting some encouragement to speak, when Carlton, forgetting his self-sufficiency in his uneasiness, addressed him with seeming carelessness.

"The Lynx is slow of foot," he said, "or he has lost his way; what think you, Anak?"

"The Lynx is a prisoner," replied the Indian, calmly.

"A prisoner!" responded the count, now thoroughly alarmed; "how can you know this? surely you do but guess—the Huron would not easily be taken."

"The sun has twice gone down since our brother left the camp," the Algonquin answered, pointing to the west; "he is swift as the roe, the path of the bee is not straighter than his—yet he comes not back."

"But he waits for the ladies, Anak; they are not ready."

“Is there no night in the English city? does not the wind come and go? why has his voice not been heard among us to say that all is well? The Lynx has been taken—yesterday—I have said.”

Carlton turned pale at this confident assertion, which his opinion of Indian sagacity would not permit him to disregard. With childish eagerness he turned to the soldiers, hoping to find something in their suggestions which would weaken the force of the other's suspicions, but in this he was disappointed.

“If Anak, there, says the Lynx is caught,” answered the most voluble of the party, a tall, stout man, whose good-natured face was seamed with long wound-like traces of the small-pox—“if Anak says he is caught, then good bye to the Lynx, sir; I've known that Algonquin five years, have fought by his side in twenty battles with the Iroquois, have hunted with him, eaten with him, slept with him, and never knew him out of his reckoning, but once, sir; he talks but little, and gives fewer opinions, perhaps, than a lawyer, but when he does speak, it is to the point.”

“And do you yourself think it probable that the Huron is a prisoner?” asked the count.

“I do, if it please your honor,” replied the soldier,—“the city is close at hand, and the Lynx, if at liberty, would not have allowed a night to pass without returning to camp, successful or otherwise—besides, sir, there is a sort of freemasonry among these savages, and the Algonquin there——”

“I know his views sufficiently already,” said Carlton, nervously, and turning to his other followers, he proceeded to canvass their sentiments on the subject with an earnestness quite disproportionate to the value of the counsel received, for being entirely unused to such an honor, they were chiefly solicitous how to acquit themselves in speaking, and did not dare to dissent from the opinions already delivered.

Carlton's grief at the failure of his expedition would have been extreme had it not been merged in alarm for his personal safety. If

the Huron was a prisoner, as he now no longer doubted, the baron's letter, he thought, was doubtless in the hands of the English government, and a detachment must be already on their way from the city in pursuit of himself and his party. So great was his trepidation that he even fancied, momentarily, as the wind came sighing through the forests, that he heard the rustling of an armed body, approaching his quarters. Dissembling his fears as best he could, he announced with much gravity to his men that their views of the fate of the Huron were entirely accordant with his own, but that he had seen fit to consult them, instead of acting exclusively upon his own convictions in a matter of so much moment, and concluded by giving orders to get ready the boats for immediate departure.

Although accustomed to implicit obedience, the soldiers exchanged looks of surprise for a moment, at this mandate. Their position was so secure, and the prospect of any immediate attack so improbable, that they could not understand the motives which prompted flight, and the desertion of an ally, who might possibly yet return. Francis, venturing to speak, with many apologies, and much circumlocution, disclaimed intending to advise a departure, and the Indian, emboldened by his example, offered to go in pursuit of his companion; but Carlton, thoroughly panic-stricken, refused to listen to any proposition. The boats were prepared, and the party embarked at about ten in the evening, little imagining that their colleague, completely successful in his quest, was at that moment less than two leagues distant from them and rapidly approaching.

CHAPTER XVI.

“Tis the middle watch of a summer's night—
The earth is dark, but the heavens are bright ;
Nought is seen in the vault on high,
But the moon, and the stars, and the cloudless sky,
And the flood which rolls its milky hue
A river of light on the welkin blue.”—*Drake's Culprit Fay.*

WITH the low monotonous sound of dipping oars, and of the trickling of water from their blades, did the boat of Henrich, under the skilful guidance of the Huron, glide rapidly along the stream, keeping close under the eastern shore, where the shadows of the forest withheld even the faint starlight from its path. The village of the Wappenos in which the Lynx had so nearly terminated his career, was situated near the river, a few miles south of the count's covert quarters, and it became necessary for the voyagers on approaching it, to diverge at a wide angle from their course to avoid discovery. Not that Henrich entertained any fear of hostility from his allies towards himself, or his present party, but he felt that he could not answer for their pacific conduct towards Carlton's command, if he should be unlucky enough to draw them upon the camp. There was danger, too, if the singular departure of Henrich and his companions became known to the Wappenos, that some gossiping or treacherous member of the tribe might divulge it in the city, and bring pursuit upon them from that quarter, before they had attained a distance, which would render it harmless. It was an easy matter to gain the centre of the stream, and thus defy discovery from the shore, and for a while, they had pursued their new course with a

confidence which relaxed the rules of vigilance, when the Lynx suddenly ceased rowing, and assumed a listening attitude.

"It is an echo," said Henrich, as the sound of dipping oars reached them for a moment, and then suddenly ceased; "we are nearer to the western shore than I had supposed."

"It is a boat," answered the Huron, pointing to the southwest, where, at the distance of about a hundred yards, the outline of a canoe could be faintly seen on the water; "it is a boat, rowed by two Iroquois"—and the Indian, giving more of a shoreward direction to his skiff, resumed his progress, with a slightly increased velocity, yet avoiding the appearance of flight.

"Our friend must possess even more than the lynx's power of vision," said Blanche, addressing Huntington in a low voice, and dissembling her fears, "if he can discern the occupants of that boat; I have been called quick-sighted, and can scarcely see the shape of the vessel itself."

"It is not improbable that the Indian sees no more," replied Henrich; "but these wild foresters are trained to the active use of all their faculties; some irregularity in the fall of the oars has told him the canoe was not propelled by a single person, and it scarcely requires even Indian sagacity to detect the difference between the rowing of a white man and a savage."

"You are at least ingenious in comprehending him," answered Blanche; "but did he not even designate the tribe to which the strangers belonged?"

"Iroquois is a generic name for the whole confederacy of the Five Nations," said Henrich; "and there is little likelihood of finding Indians in this region who do not belong to one or another of its subdivisions; the word, in the mouth of the Huron, may almost be considered synonymous with enemy."

The party had not proceeded far, before it became evident that they were followed by the strangers, though in a manner that rather indicated a desire to watch their movements than to commit any

immediate aggression; the pursuers maintaining a nearly uniform distance from the skiff, which the Lynx found it difficult either to increase or materially diminish. The very pauses of his boat were promptly imitated by the other, as if it were but some distant shadow of its predecessor, thrown back upon the wave.

This was an espionage not patiently to be endured, and, after a few moments' consultation with Henrich, the Lynx again changed his course, and rowed rapidly towards the shore, hoping, in the obscurity of its deeper shadows, to elude further pursuit. But the phantom canoe was still in their wake, with a celerity equal to their own, and a silence that gave an air of singular mystery to its movements. Henrich began to suspect that he was followed from the city by some one authorized to require the return of Miss Montaigne and her cousin, and that an Indian canoe, with its oarsmen, had been employed to ascertain his route, and to pilot a more formidable foe upon his track; but whatever was the character of the enemy, he did not exhibit a ready tact in detecting the designs of the fugitives, who were permitted to enter the shadows at a distance from the former, that at once buried them from sight.

The Lynx did not fail to take advantage of this error, by changing his course and increasing his speed, but still maintaining a northerly direction, enjoining meanwhile the strictest silence upon his companions, and handling his oars with a delicacy of motion that seemed scarcely to create a sound. The skiff shot ahead beside the high bank, and beneath the overhanging boughs, as nearly noiseless and invisible as anything of material mould could be; and the closest attention could no longer detect any signs of pursuit. Half an hour of silent progress brought it to the mouth of a small creek, which, after a little examination, the Lynx pronounced to be the one leading to the secret camp; and as the little bark glided into the opening, embowered with interlacing trees from the opposing shores, the whole party experienced a sense of relief.

“We have probably had a very useless alarm, after all,” said

Henrich, glad to dismiss his former suspicions; "our followers were doubtless only some belated hunters of the Wappenos, returning to their village, and attracted by curiosity out of their course."

"I shall be glad if it proves to be nothing worse," replied Blanche, not altogether at ease, yet striving to maintain the appearance of equanimity; "but you attribute a propensity to the red men, from which they are usually considered exempt."

"I know," answered Henrich, "that the absence of curiosity forms part of the poetical character of the Indian, yet I have ever found them a meddling, gossiping race: on state occasions, indeed, it is different; then, they put on their dignity, like a cloak, and like some counting-house Christians on Sunday, assume all their cardinal virtues for the occasion."

"Which, like Sunday clothes, seem all the fresher for being seldom worn, I suppose," said Blanche, laughing; "you are severe upon your forest friends."

"Not at all," replied Huntington; "they have many noble qualities, to which you will always find me ready to do justice; but the want of inquisitiveness is not one of them: is it not so, sachem?" he continued, addressing the Huron—"I speak of the Iroquois, of course."

"The Iroquois are dogs," answered the Lynx, giving but a moment's heed to the question, and immediately returning to a close scrutiny of the shore past which they were gliding; at the next instant he uttered an ejaculation of pleasure, as his eye rested upon some remembered landmark, and running the skiff into a little nook, he leaped lightly upon the land, where he was at once followed by his companions. A hill of no great height, but nearly perpendicular, rose from the beach, and a slight indentation at its base, the entrance of which was thickly studded with bushes, had formed at once a refuge for Carlton's little band, and a place of concealment for their boats. Into this recess the Lynx hastily

darted, and after a few minutes' absence, re-appeared with the startling announcement that it was vacant.

"The count has heard the foxes bark," he said, unable wholly to repress his contempt; "or the drumming bird has come too near; he has gone, and brave men have gone with him—it is bad!"

The emotions with which this intelligence was received were various and conflicting. The prospect of being compelled to abandon their voyage and return to New York, was at first not unwelcome to the ladies, whose courage was already well nigh expended; but the reflection that the journey would thus be only postponed, and not avoided, and the memory of her recent perils in the city, combined to give preponderance to a feeling of regret in the mind of Blanche. Some jealousy for the honor of her father's messenger mingled with these thoughts, and she at once suggested that Carlton might only have changed his quarters to some more convenient or safe location in the vicinity, or that he had been surprised and overpowered by an enemy.

"These are possibilities, certainly," answered Henrich; "and only daylight, which is yet three hours distant, can reveal whether they are probable: it is useless to search by this light, and dangerous to make signals; but if you are able to pass the remainder of the night here——"

"It is at least as easy as to return," Blanche replied; "we should be ill fitted for our journey if we shrunk from so slight an inconvenience; a warm night in the open air is no great hardship, and yet I could wish, for the very romance of the thing, that we had the tents and hammocks, which the Lynx assures me were brought for our use."

"We will try what can be done by way of a substitute," said Henrich, gaily; "you have your cloaks, and you shall see that a forest couch can easily be rigged by hands that are used to expedients: as for the Lynx and myself, we shall have the honor of being your sentinels."

So saying, he signified his wishes to the Huron, and the two, raising the skiff from the water, transferred it within the cavernous recess which has been described, where a quantity of light boughs of pine and hemlock, carefully adjusted within it, constituted a bed at once soft and elastic. The cloak of the young man was thrown over the whole, and Blanche and Emily proceeded to examine their novel resting-place; the latter protesting, in a doleful tone, that it was altogether delightful, but that she was sure she "could not sleep a wink with that horrid screech-owl yelling from a neighboring tree-top."

"It sounds exactly like what I fancy an Indian war-cry to be," she said, "although I dare say it is very different, and I'm sure I don't wonder if your count what's-his-name was afraid to stay here; there—there, only listen," she continued, putting her hands to her ears, and looking upwards, as the shrill unearthly sounds rang through the air—"don't you think he could be induced to go away?"

"I fear not," answered Henrich, unable to repress a smile at the words and manner of the speaker, "we dare neither shoot nor shout at him, and he is far above the reach of any missile sent from the hand; try to consider him only a serenader; he is, I assure you, a very small and harmless bird,—less than a robin, and answers better to the term *vox et praterca nihil*, than anything else in nature."

"I hope he will answer to nothing here," said Blanche; "I am sure I shall ask him no questions—I shall grow dreadfully nervous myself, since Emily has reminded me of it; is it probable that he will remain there long?"

"Until morning, undoubtedly," Henrich replied, "when he will go to sleep—there—there, that's an extra note, indeed; what say you, Sachem, is there any way of getting rid of this bird-fiend?"

The Indian uttered a low laugh, and raising his hands to his mouth, emitted a succession of quick shrill sounds in imitation of a night-

hawk, which now in one quarter, and now in another, seemed to be hovering over the trees. A quick redoubled scream of the owl, striking the ear with painful acuteness, and then growing fainter until it died away in the distance, attested the faithfulness of the mimicry, and showed that the enemy was effectually dislodged.

“That was well done, my brother!” said Henrich, much pleased, though less surprised than the ladies at the expedient,—“you must teach me that note, some time; good bye to Mr. Vox; he has pressing business in some other quarter—and now, ladies, you perceive the Lynx has taken his station for the night, beneath that elm tree; mine is at the foot of this oak, where his Huron highness gives me permission to sleep; you must take our bearings, as a sailor would say, from your cot, and you’ll know where to find us, if you should be frightened in the night.”

“We will endeavor not to disturb the slumbers of so vigilant a sentinel as you are like to prove,” replied Blanche—“but here, Emily, give Sachem the second his blanket; he will certainly need it on the ground, more than we in the boat, where we have our own cloaks and shawls.”

The reasonableness of this assertion was too apparent to admit of contest, and Henrich, receiving his cloak, quietly disposed himself to sleep, while the ladies, laughing not a little at their various ineffectual attempts to gain a comfortable reclining position, finally triumphed over all difficulties, and followed his example. One pair of restless eyes alone remained open through the remaining hours of the night, revolving in every direction from which an enemy could possibly approach, with a vigilance that betokened the consciousness of an important trust, and which was, perhaps, increased by the unforgotten horrors of the gantlet and the stake.

CHAPTER XVII.

“ The meek-eyed morn appears, mother of dews,
At first faint glimmering in the dappled east ;
Till far o'er ether spreads the wid'ning glow,
And from before the lustre of her face,
White break the clouds away.”—*Thomson's Seasons.*

DAY had fully dawned, and some crimson-tinted clouds were even announcing that the sun was not far below the horizon, when Henrich, awaking from sleep, bounded suddenly to his feet, alarmed at the very profoundness of his repose, and at the conjectured evils which might have occurred during its continuance. His first glance was at the boat, where the closely enveloped figures of the ladies were quietly reposing, and his next at the sentinel who remained motionless at his post, with no signs of weariness or impatience.

“ Your watch has been undisturbed ?” he said, hastily approaching the Huron, “ and you have discovered no traces of the count and his party ; is it so ?”

It was with a look almost of affection that the Indian's eyes encountered those of his young friend and deliverer, and for a moment he seemed dwelling in memory upon the events of the preceding day :

“ There has been no harm,” he said ; “ a wolf howled from the hill,” pointing to a projection of the bank near the sleepers—“ and a wild-cat leaped over the boat, but I clapped my hands, and they ran away.”

“ Is it possible ?” exclaimed Henrich, glancing at the ladies, “ that

they have been exposed to perils like these ? they must not know it, or they will even yet die of terror. But the count,—learn you aught of him ?”

“ He has gone home,” replied the Huron, bitterly, pointing at the same time to a tree at a little distance from where they stood ; “ see, the Algonquin has said it ; my white brother can read !”

Henrich was not usually disposed to doubt his scholarship in the particular named, but he found himself not a little puzzled on approaching the tree, to construe the simple tokens it contained, nor was it without the aid of the Lynx that he fully comprehended them.

“ Here is an arrow fixed in the bark, pointing to the north,” he said,—“ that is plain enough ; somebody has gone in that direction ; stay, here are six notches on it, one considerably in advance of the others ; that I suppose means that the whole party have gone, consisting of five men and their leader ; but why does the arrow point upward as well as northward ?” he said, addressing the Huron ; “ they certainly have not gone through the air.”

“ They have gone a great way,” answered the Lynx.

“ Ah, yes, I am dull—that signifies a distant destination very plainly,” Henrich replied, or rather muttered to himself ; “ and it is partly broken here in the middle, I suppose, to show that the object of the expedition is defeated or abandoned ?”

“ Right,” said the Huron ; “ my brother can read the language of the red men : does he see anything more ?”

“ The tree is blazed a little here on the north side with a hatchet,” replied Huntington, “ and there are a few rude marks, but I can make nothing of them : here is a new moon down in one corner ; and there is something like a face, with a hand before it ; if it is designed for a likeness of your friend, I don’t envy him his beauty.”

“ My brother must go to school,” said the Indian smiling,—“ he cannot read ; see, the moon was setting when they started, and the Algonquin was ashamed !”

The symbols which have been described were of the coarsest kind, and such as may have been prepared almost within the time which has been consumed in reading the brief description of them; yet, they preserved a general accuracy of outline that spoke well for the artistical talents of the savage. That they reflected still more credit upon his heart, need scarcely be said, since, being compelled thus to desert a friend in the land of their common enemy, he sought by these means to enable the other still to overtake and rejoin his companions; and there was little doubt that every halting-place on his homeward journey would bear evidence of the same generous design.

“The moon was setting when they started, do you say?” asked Henrich; “it must have been, then, but a few hours before our arrival; if we had known it we might have overtaken them, and might possibly do so, even yet.”

The Huron had longed for this proposition, though he had but little hopes that the ladies would accede to it; a love of truth, however, would not permit him to hold out any false hopes of success; the canoes, he said, were swifter than the skiff, and had already six hours the start; but the count made many pauses, and lost much time in frequently crossing the river at the least alarm.

“But the sun is moving, while we stand still,” he continued, pointing to the eastern horizon, where the orb of day was just beginning to appear,—“let the daughter of the great chief speak—the Lynx must obey.”

“You are right; no time must be lost, if we are to proceed,” answered Henrich; “go waken them, and we will decide the question with a full council board.”

“We will spare you that trouble, gentlemen, or sachems,” exclaimed the laughing voice of Blanche, at their side; “we have been up these three minutes, and Emily has even found a rivulet in the rocks, in which she is making her ablutions, and of which I am to have the

second privilege; I dare say we shall have breakfast ready in a trice: what would you please to order?"

"I do not know, really," said Henrich, "a grilled screech-owl might not be amiss, or a few frogs from the creek: if these cannot be procured, we must try to content ourselves with the commoner dainties of ham, bread, and pastry, with which my good grandmother has so liberally supplied us."

"Many thanks, then, for her kindness," Blanche replied; "I really supposed all our hopes of a meal depended upon finding Count Carlton's larder: is anything yet learned in regard to his movements?"

"Everything," answered Huntington; "the Lynx has received a letter from an Algonquin Indian who belonged to his company."

"A letter from an Indian!—how written?—and by what post? Surely you are jesting."

"By this post," Henrich added, pointing to the tree at their side, "and if I have rightly followed the direction of your eyes, they have already discovered it."

"I see a broken arrow which seems to have been caught in the crevices of the bark," the young lady answered with an earnest air: "if there is any meaning in it, tell me, I pray, without delay: are our friends at hand?"

"I grieve to say they are gone, Miss Montaigne: they started last evening for home, but two hours before our arrival—see, here is the proof."

Henrich proceeded to explain the various symbols before them to the great astonishment of Blanche, whose extreme interest in the information left her little thought for the ingenuity displayed in conveying it.

"And is it possible, Mr. Huntington," she said, "that this intelligence, which seems to be indebted to an active imagination for half its meaning, can be relied on—can be the proper basis of any action?"

“It is as reliable as ever were general orders under the sign-manual of the Baron Montaigne,” answered the young man promptly; “I would venture my life on its accuracy; the Lynx has not thought it necessary even to look for any corroborative testimony, and only waits your decision as to your wishes.”

“What can I decide? what ought I to do?” she asked, looking imploringly, and with an alarmed air upon Huntington—“Surely, surely we cannot continue our journey, with only yourself and the Lynx for our protectors; nothing, indeed, but my father’s injunctions would have induced me to attempt it, even with the larger escort which we anticipated. There can be but slight hope of overtaking the count if we should follow him, and it only remains to return to the city: what think you, Mr. Huntington, does not prudence demand such a course, and have I not done all that duty requires in trying to meet the wishes of my father?”

“You certainly have discharged your full duty, Miss Montaigne, if I can correctly estimate your position,” Henrich answered, “and prudence, as you say, forbids the thought of attempting to travel to Castle Montaigne, with so slight a guard; yet I own that I speak with the bias of a strong wish for your return to New York. The Huron thinks there would be a chance of our overtaking his late companions, but scarcely claims it, I believe, to be very probable.”

“Doubtless, we must return,” said Blanche, “yet we will leave nothing in reason, undone; it is early, and the day will be long; if you please, therefore, and the Lynx is willing——”

“You *command* this company, Miss Montaigne,” said Henrich, smiling, “please to speak in the imperative mood; no eastern despot has a more willing slave than the Huron seems disposed to be to you,—and I, you know, am his brother.”

“You honor me overmuch. The Sultanness, then, if you will have it so, will proceed in her barge up the river for the space of three or four hours; if within that time no trace of our reculant subjects can be found, we will return and abandon the search. The count, you

know," she continued, dropping her assumed air, "may have encamped on the shore, and may discover us from his hiding-place; he may not think it prudent to travel by daylight so near the English capital."

The plan of action being once settled, no time was lost in carrying it out; the boat was re-transferred to the creek, and, within a few minutes, the whole company embarked, not a little elated with the novelty and interest of the occasion. The morning was fine and the air exhilarating, and there were many conspiring causes to throw joy and gladness into young and confident hearts, buoyant with a thousand indefinite yet brilliant hopes. They dropped quietly down the glassy stream, and into the broad blue river, greeted by the early song of birds, and catching the fragrance of a thousand flowers; while the voice of the chirruping squirrel, and the tapping of the busy woodpecker, and the far faint voice of the wary crow, and now and then the crashing tread of some larger animal, startled from his repose, told that the forests were alive with their countless varieties of existence; aye, and all were happy, and were proclaiming to the dull eye and ear of man, plainer than printed tomes or sounding speech, the one great beneficent Author of Nature.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“Calm is the deep and purple sea,
Yea, smoother than the sand;
The waves that woltering wont to be,
Are stable like the land.

“So silent is the cessile air
That every cry and call,
The hills, and dales, and forests fair
Again repeat them all.”—*Alexander Hume.*

FOUR hours the voyagers proceeded northward, keeping a most vigilant watch in every direction, not only for the party of which they were in pursuit, but for the roving bands of Indians which they had reason to fear they might encounter. The danger which threatened from this source, though slight as yet, increased at every mile's remove from the capital, for although the tribes who inhabited or rather who hunted in the adjacent forests, were in alliance with the English, the Huron guide would doubtless give character to the whole party in their eyes if the travellers should be unfortunate enough to be intercepted. No signs of human life, however, were visible, and in vain was every eye pained with the intense effort to discover, in the bright pathway of waters that seemed to extend interminably northward, some trace of the object of their search.

“I am afraid to penetrate further into these solitudes,” exclaimed Blanche at length, “the stillness of death hangs over them, and the echoes of our voices come back to us from shores that are half a mile distant; what say you, Emily, shall we not return?”

“As you please, cousin Blanche,” said Miss Roselle, fully seconding the wishes of Miss Montaigne, yet willing to gain credit for the larger share of courage, “I am only lady of the bed-chamber to your royal highness, and as duty seems to be quite the watchword here, I have made up my mind that it is mine either to be scalped, or tomahawked at your bidding, without repining.”

“Ah, do not trifle, Emily; I am really alarmed—say, have we not done all——?”

“Our duty—you would say again,” interrupted Emily—“yes cousin Blanche, all—all believe me, and works of supererogation enough beside to constitute a capital for a canonized saint; Father Ledra might envy us, and shall draw upon me for my share, if he chooses, when we are once safe in Castle Montaigne.”

“Do not jest at the faith of our dear friend; whatever may be its errors, his prayers rise daily for us, Emily, and there seems something of their influence in the gentleness of the fate which has thus far attended us. We will return,” she added, sadly, and with starting tears; “it will be a disappointment to my father, and he will perhaps even blame me, but it cannot be avoided.”

Blanche buried her face in her hands, and scarcely suppressed the feelings which every allusion to her parent seemed to awaken; and while the others remained silent from respect to her emotion, the skiff was quietly turned about, and with no change in its steady, monotonous motion, pursued its returning course. The hour was about nine in the morning, the same morning and the same hour in which Ensign Midge, baffled in his gallant enterprise of capturing a prisoner of state, had carried back to Major Grover the tidings of his discomfiture.

It was long past mid-day when the travellers reached the creek from which they had set out in the morning; and Henrich and the Lynx, who had taken alternate hours at the oars, were sufficiently fatigued to look longingly at the cool landscape past which they were gliding. The proximity of the city left little to fear from

hostile Indians, and a challenge from Blanche to stop for rest and a lunch in the woods, was readily accepted. A favorable spot was selected, and the vessel having been landed within the cover of some bushes, its wearied occupants leaped gladly upon the shore, the baskets were brought out, and while, at the command of Miss Montaigne, the oarsmen extended themselves in the shade for repose, the ladies proceeded to arrange the meal.

"It becomes us," said Blanche, "to see that the strength is not uselessly expended which is required in our service; please to let those dreadful guns point in the other direction, or we shall never get past you—there, you may sleep now, if you choose, for the next fifteen minutes—now, Emily, it is our turn to work."

A dinner that might have excited the envy of a modern picnic party was speedily set out from the varied and liberal supplies of Dame Waldron; a little eminence or knoll, garnished with wild flowers, serving for the table, for which even a cloth of spotless white was not wanting. Water was procured from the creek, and everything was soon arranged with a delicacy and neatness that seemed to impart an additional flavor to the viands; yet there were appetites in waiting which scarcely required tempting; and the companions, without distinction of caste, were soon actively employed in appeasing them.

Many good things were disposed of, and some sparkling thoughts were generated under their influence; but while the mirth of the party was at its height, a sudden sound of oars, and of voices close at hand, came distinctly to every ear, and elicited a quick but slight ejaculation of alarm from the ladies. Henrich sprang instantaneously to his feet, grasping his gun as he rose, while the Lynx, also seizing his weapon, threw himself as suddenly upon the ground, and each remained a moment motionless, gazing towards the shore. The sound continued, and came nearer, seeming to proceed from the immediate margin of the river; but the bank, which was some-

what high, and was edged with bushes, concealed the speakers from view, and rendered their voices indistinct to the listeners.

The Huron signified to his companions that they should remain seated and silent while he crept to the shore and reconnoitred the strangers; when, with the stealthy motion of a cat, slow and noiseless, rustling no leaves, crackling not so much as the smallest stick in his path, the Indian gained the bank, and buried his head in a bush that overhung its edge. No portion of his person was suffered to protrude through his leafy covert; but his eyes, brought nearly to its outer side, rolled, sparkling, in every direction, like those of the watchful snake, gleaming from the still grass at the unconscious invader of his haunts.

Henrich's situation was one which gave him a partial view of the Huron's face, and he watched it with the hope of gleaning from its expression the earliest intelligence of the nature of the interruption; but for some moments it gave no evidence of any discovery. Suddenly, however, it lighted with animation, and, at the next moment, a marked and extraordinary change came upon it; a look which, but for the Lynx's known bravery, Henrich would have pronounced to evince the most unequivocal fear. The Indian drew cautiously back, and when his face came fully into the light, there was no longer room for a doubt as to the character of the emotions it depicted; terror, absolute and unqualified, such as a warrior may not exhibit, such as the tortures and the stake in the Wappeno village had not inspired, were plainly marked upon his features. So apparent was this, even to Blanche and Emily, that each turned pale as they gazed upon him, and for some moments after he had crept silently back to the knoll, his companions waited in vain for him to speak and explain the mystery.

"What has my brother seen?" whispered Henrich, at length, disguising, as best he could, his own growing alarm; "are the Wappenos upon us? if so, we have but little cause to dread them—but perhaps they are Mohawks from the north?"

The Huron shook his head, and laying down his gun with a carelessness as to its position that seemed to evince no expectation of requiring its aid, pointed steadily to the ground, and muttered some unintelligible words in his own dialect.

“Merciful Father !” exclaimed Emily, grasping the arm of Henrich ; “ what does he mean ? let us fly into the woods, quick—quick—there is no time to lose.”

“ Keep silence, Miss Roselle, I implore you,” whispered Henrich, with great equanimity, passing, at the same time, a cup of water from the grassy table to Blanche, who stared at him with deathly paleness ; “ we must not stir or speak ; an Indian’s ears are like the mole’s, and the whole forest is but a whispering gallery to their acute senses ; once more I implore you,” he continued, turning to the Lynx, “ to tell us the cause of the alarm : what was it that you saw ?”

The Huron again pointed to the ground, and whispered, “ What you call him—with the pitchfork—down there—our good fathers at the chapel have told us—he roasts the Iroquois—see !”

A look of horror closed this explanation, as a rustling was heard near the bank, and the white hair and black visage of Harry Bolt emerged from the parted bushes, followed by his long, ungainly body. A burst of laughter succeeded from Henrich, at once re-assuring the alarmed ladies, and partly allaying the fears of the puzzled Indian who continued to gaze with a bewildered air, alternately at the approaching negro, and at his own now merry companions.

Harry was hatless and coatless, his brawny arms were bare to the shoulders, and it was scarcely strange that the Lynx, who had never seen an African, and had been taught by his spiritual guides at the castle, not only the existence of the author of evil, but his frequent personal appearance on the earth, had suspected his presence in so strange an apparition ; especially in the land of the Iroquois, where, according to the Huron belief, he would have frequent employment.

Harry was followed at a little distance by a boy of his own color, and seemed to be in a state of excitement not materially less than that which had recently agitated the Indian.

“ Oh, massa Henrich ! massa Henrich ! ” he exclaimed, as he drew near, with widely distended eyes, and upraised arms, “ oh *massa Henrich*—*massa Henrich* ! ”

“ What’s the matter, Harry ? ” said Henrich, laughing ; “ speak out, and have done with it, if you have anything to say ; you have frightened the Lynx enough already ; I don’t want to flatter you, but he really mistook you for the devil ! ”

“ Oh, no, no, Massa Lynch, ” said Harry, “ I ain’t de debbil, but he’s comin’, sartain ; Gaffer Wallon send me to tell you, Massa Henrich ; oh golly, oh gosh ! ”

“ What can the chattering baboon mean ? ” exclaimed Huntington, “ he hasn’t come here for nothing, that’s evident ; here, you, Ruppy, ” he continued, addressing the boy, “ do you know anything about this ? what did my grandfather send Harry here for ? ”

“ I don’t know, ” said the boy, more composedly, though with a bashful air—“ but the house has been full of sojers, this morning, ramsacking it all ober, sir—and they cotched Miss Doxy and wuz goin’ to carry her off, kaze dey said it was Miss Mountain. ”

“ Yes, sir, ” chimed in the senior negro, “ and Gaffer ’fraid you come back, or go too slow, and dey send a sloop arter you, or sumpin—oh golly, we look ebery where for you, and wuz jes goin’ back, when Ruppy, dare, seed your boat in de bushes. ”

“ It is some new device of that dreadful man, ” exclaimed Blanche, with ashen lips, “ do you know, Harry, whether Major Grover was with the soldiers ? ”

“ No, mum, ” answered the boy, hastily, “ he wa’nt dare—it was General Midge, and he s’rounded de house, and drawed his sword, and looked mighty grand. ”

“ Ensign Midge, ” said Henrich, “ is one of Grover’s creatures, and I fear it is as you suspect ; they have evidently learned your name,

Miss Montaigne, for the boy seems to have heard it mentioned, and this is some pretence of making you a prisoner of state; what did you say they called Doxy, boy?"

"Dey called her Miss Mountain, sar; and she said she was ony Doxy, and was goin' to tell ware you wuz, and Gaffer Wallon made her shut up."

"A thousand blessings on his venerable head!" exclaimed Huntington—"we must not neglect his warning; Miss Montaigne, the moment has come for an important decision; on either hand is peril, and you must choose between them; a return to New York, or a long, weary, dangerous journey, with, I grieve to say, a sadly deficient guard."

"I need no time for choice," exclaimed Blanche, with an earnestness that startled her hearers; "I would trust myself this moment in the camp of the Mohawks, rather than in the hands of that fearful man; but you, Emily, I have no right to require to share such perils; nor you, my friend; I will go with the Lynx alone, and God, who protects the friendless, will be our shield."

It was with an air of lofty resolution that these words were uttered, imparting to the beautiful features of the speaker, a new and singular expression; whoever had beheld the marked countenance of the Baron Montaigne, and the eagle-like flashing of his eye, could not fail to perceive the passing resemblance—revealed, as it were, by the lightning flash of feeling—betwixt father and child.

"Do not believe, Miss Montaigne," replied Henrich, "that I can be induced to desert you; were I willing to do so, the world of chivalry would cry shame on such an act: I approve, aye, applaud, your choice, and am ready to share its perils; one more, therefore, is added to your guard—what say you, Harry Bolt, at making a third?"

"Making what, massa Henrich?" asked the negro.

"Will you go with us to protect this lady, three hundred miles

up these rivers and lakes, to her father's house; there will be hardship and danger—perhaps death.”

“Massa Henrich,” said the negro, “I will go to de moon with Missa Blanche: I will go to de land of de Hottenpots with her! I cry half de way up here, fear de sojers cotch her—she make Jule free, oh golly!”

Henrich grasped the hand of the negro, and shook it as if they had been brothers, while the tears poured like rain down the cheeks of Miss Montaigne. “We are three strong men,” he said, “and the Lynx alone is a host in sagacity and skill; add to this that there is some hope even yet of overtaking the count, and our cause is by no means desperate; only one question more remains to be decided;” and Huntington turned to Miss Roselle as he spoke.

“It is decided!” said Emily, catching the contagious enthusiasm of the moment—“I will go with my cousin, even to death.”

If Miss Roselle was ever captious and trifling in the hour of security, she yet possessed in her inner nature much of woman's self-sacrificing spirit; Blanche bestowed upon her a look of exceeding tenderness; and when, at the next moment, Henrich turned to converse aside with the negro, the cousins, for the first time, perhaps, since childhood, were locked in a sisterly embrace.

“Let us then lose no time,” said Henrich; “Ruppy can take back Harry's boat, but we must guard against his prating; here, boy,” he continued, thrusting several pieces of silver coin into the lad's hand, “mind now what I say to you: you must not speak a word in two days, excepting to grandfather Waldron—do you hear?”

“Yes, Massa, I won't tell ——”

“Tut—tut—that isn't enough—if your mouth opens, out it will come in some shape, I know; but you must not speak a word to a living soul in two days, excepting to grandfather—will you promise?”

“Yes, Massa, I promise; I'll go to sleep,” said the boy, grinning,

and then setting his lips closely together, and eyeing joyfully the sparkling coin.

The party now proceeded at once to re-embark; and as they approached the water, an ejaculation of pleasure from the Lynx was heard, which proved to be occasioned by a sight of the boat in which the negro had come up from the city: it was a long, light, and narrow canoe, of moderate size, and admirably adapted for the purpose of the fugitives.

"This is truly a windfall," exclaimed Henrich,—“whose is this, Harry?—but no matter—if it were the Queen's I would take it in such a cause: whose is it, I say?”

"It's mine, by jingo!" answered Harry, triumphantly; "I buy him of Winny last spring to go fishin' on de Sound, and cotch him half full de fust time: and dat's my gun, too," he added; "don't Massa Henrich remember how I shoot de turkey's tail off with him last Christmas, at de shootin' match; and ole Gummel wouldn't let me hab him, 'kaze I didn't draw blood—blast his old pictur!"

"All our fortunate stars seem to be in conjunction to-day," said Henrich; "I knew, indeed, that Harry never stirs abroad without his rifle—but the canoe is an unexpected treasure."

The necessary changes were hastily made, and within five minutes the two boats were receding from each other.

"Remember, Ruppy, you are to give my best love, and our thanks to old Mr. Waldron," Blanche called out as the boats began to separate.

The boy nodded.

"Will you remember, Ruppy?" she asked again, with much earnestness, bending over the side of the boat, and looking back as she spoke; and again the boy replied only with an affirmative gesture of the head.

"Why don't you speak, you ill-mannered fellow?" asked Henrich, angrily: "do you hear what Miss Montaigne says to you?"

Ruppy bowed his head to his knees, but still kept his lips tightly together; and then, by way of explaining his conduct, stopped rowing, took the silver coins from his pocket, and held them up to view.

“All right!” answered Henrich, laughing, and the travellers proceeded rapidly on their way.

CHAPTER XIX.

“See he bears the line away,
Round him flies the snowy spray,
I have given him length and line,
One more struggle, he is mine.”—*Miss Landon.*

It was with an air of confidence, which at times, before, had seemed partly to desert him, that the Lynx had taken his seat in the slender and graceful canoe, which springing forward in its path, with an equable and noiseless motion, promised a very different rate of progress from that to which the voyagers had hitherto been confined. Taking the centre of the stream, and keeping a vigilant watch on either shore, they maintained their way with a uniform speed, and without molestation, until dark, when they paused for a few hours of repose. Soon after midnight they resumed their course, and by the time the risen sun of the ensuing morning was brightening the waters with its horizontal beams there were twenty good leagues of land and river betwixt the fugitives and the city they had left.

Early in the day, they again stopped for rest and shelter from the heat; and when, after a few hours, some friendly clouds had obscured the burning sky, they again ventured forth. No time was unnecessarily lost, and nothing that the strength, vigilance, and valor, of three men, conscious of a most momentous charge, could effect, was left undone to secure the safety and comfort of the ladies, who in their turn manifested the utmost fortitude and resolution, and a cheerful acquiescence in the many inconveniences and privations to which they were necessarily subjected.

On the second morning their provisions, which had been designed as auxiliary to those of the count, rather than as an independent supply, had become reduced to a small store, and under the vigorous attacks of three strong and hard-working men, could not evidently last for another day. It became therefore necessary to forage for food, and as it was unsafe to fire a gun, lest it should attract hostile notice, the uncertainty of procuring it caused no little anxiety. Harry, however, was observed, as they stopped at mid-day, on a small island, to eye various parts of the shore with much minuteness, and finally announced, partly in reply to the discussions on this point, and partly doubtless, in reference to what was passing in his own mind, that he saw some ground which must contain plenty.

"Plenty of what, Harry?" asked Huntington, "we shall scarcely find corn or potatoes in this wilderness, I fear; there may be artichokes and some other wild roots that are edible, but they will not give much strength for work like ours."

"No, no, massa Henrich, I don't mean nuffin like dat," said Harry, helping to secure the canoe, "I mean *worms!*"

"Worms, Harry!" exclaimed Henrich, "you don't think we can eat worms? I have heard, indeed, of your Hottenpots, as you call them, or some other African tribe, doing such things, but——"

"Look a-here, massa Henrich," answered the negro, springing into the boat, and pulling out a small locker or drawer from one end of the vessel—"do you see dem?"

Henrich's eyes followed the other, and fell upon a confused lot of fishing tackle, lines, leads, hooks and buoys, which seemed to have been thrown, promiscuously, into the drawer; the great value of which in their present emergency, became strikingly apparent.

"Harry Bolt, you are a jewel," he exclaimed, "a crown-jewel! how chanced you to bring these with you?"

"Why, you see, I spected to fish and shoot bofe goin' back home, de oder arfternoon—look dare, dat is my trollin' line, dat ketch 'em bass, when de boat goin' eber so fast."

“ I see—I see, and there’s the Lynx, already, with an ashen stick, that he is going to make into a bow, I’ll be bound, in order to kill game, without making a noise ; alas ! ladies, these men will carry off all the honors, and leave me nothing that I can do for you !”

“ ‘ *Qui facit per alium, facit per se,*’ ” replied Blanche, laughing, “ if I may quote a favorite maxim of my father’s ; we are indebted to you for both the negro and the Lynx ; aye, for the very life of the latter ; he told us the whole thrilling story this morning.”

“ And with a countenance more expressive of gratitude than any I ever beheld,” added Emily—“ why, Mr. Huntington, had you left us so long in ignorance of it ?”

“ Solely, I believe, because the exciting events of the last few days have fully engrossed my attention,” said Henrich ; “ you would have heard it from me, doubtless, very soon ; indeed, you will find me an adept at blowing my own trumpet, but it must be a very gingerly twang that I give it in this instance when it is considered that all which my utmost efforts failed to effect, was procured by a few frothy words from a vagrant Indian.”

“ You certainly have a tact at decrying yourself,” Blanche replied ; “ if you blow your own trumpet, you reverse it first, and give us most diminutive notes.”

When the travellers were again in readiness to start, the Huron made his appearance equipped with an ashen bow, tightly strung, and a small bundle of arrows, while Harry came to the boat chuckling over a pocket-full of squirming bait, which, with difficulty, he was induced to transfer to some fitter receptacle. No sooner was the canoe under way than his skill in trolling was put to trial, and for a long hour an agglomerated mass of worms was towed through the water, to the great chagrin of the negro, without effect. Now the vessel went too fast, and now too slow ; at one time the oars made too much noise ; then there was too much talking, and Harry’s patience and excuses were well nigh exhausted, when a sudden succession of

strange ejaculations gave notice of some change in the state of affairs.

“ Hip—ho—dare—golly ! hold up a little, Massa Lynch,—come along here ! wo—wu—wah ; stiddy, dis way, if it’s all de same to *you* ;” the last words being uttered in answer to a lateral movement of the fish—“ now den, he’s comin’,—you eat my worms, will you ? hip—hoo—hah ! dare—dare he is, by Jingo !” and a heavy fall in the boat, followed by a brisk, flapping noise, announced the arrival of the fish, which proved to be a bass of about three pounds weight. No words can paint the exultation of the negro at this successful result of his labors, and detecting with a sportsman’s eye, Henrich’s eager interest in the scene, he at once offered him the line, which the other as readily accepted.

“ But this is not a good bass-hook, Harry,” he said, “ have you none better than this ? a little larger barb, and the point more in this direction, on one side ?”

“ I got ’em, massa,” said Harry, speaking from between his knees, as he bent over his locker, “ but dey isn’t so good, for sartain ; nothin’ like a straight hook for bass.”

“ A straight hook !” exclaimed Henrich, laughing, “ that is something new, Harry ; that must be a spear, I think ; but never mind, —yes, ah, that’s the thing exactly,” he added, selecting one from a paper which the negro held out, “ now we shall see whose hook is the best.”

So saying, Henrich proceeded to arrange the line with its new pendant, and baiting it also after some peculiar notions of his own, he tossed it upon the water, and for many minutes sat anxiously watching the result. The interest in the sport had become general, the Lynx alone who was at the oars, bending unremittingly to his task, seeming not to participate in it. Nearly half an hour had elapsed, when a nervous start of Henrich’s whole frame, and a slow steady overhand pull upon the line attracted every eye to the wake of the boat, in which, floundering upon the very surface of the

water, and approaching, open-mouthed, towards the vessel, a fish of apparently eight or ten pounds' weight was seen. At the next instant, it darted suddenly down, and Henrich, distrusting the strength of his line, suffered it to escape through his hands, for several seconds, and not until the frightened fish had partly exhausted its strength, did the angler again draw it to the surface. A breathless silence prevailed in the boat; the Lynx had dropped his oars, the negro, with bulging eyes, was leaning over the side of the canoe, while Henrich, with every faculty alive to his sport, seemed unconscious of anything besides.

"He 'm a bass, massa—a bass!" said Harry, as the struggling captive came once more in view; "I see him fins—a ten pounder—but dare, dare, he's off!—he's off! oh, de debbil take de crooked hooks; I tell a-you so, massa Henrich!"

"Stop your yelping, Harry!" exclaimed Henrich, angrily, and rising to his feet, with his eyes still intently fixed on the line, which he had again paid out, as the fish descended, "he's not off, but I see no way of getting him into the boat; he weighs fifteen pounds if he weighs an ounce."

As Henrich stopped speaking, the bass came again almost to the top of the water, and remained nearly stationary, his captor keeping a tight line upon it, and both parties seeming undecided as to future movements.

"Try um, massa!" said Harry, imploringly—"ony jis try um—he bery strong line."

"Nonsense, Harry—it would break like twine, I tell you—and if not, the hook certainly would."

As he spoke, a slight tipping of the boat attracted attention, and the Lynx, scarcely plashing the water, was seen quietly swimming from the bow of the canoe, in a direction to approach the fish from behind, which half exhausted, still lay nearly motionless, and with distended jaws, a few yards from the canoe. No sound gave warning of this new danger to the victim, and in another minute, the

long dark fingers of the Indian glided into the open gills of the bass, which the Huron, with extended arms, raised entirely from the river, maintaining himself meanwhile from sinking by the rapid motion of the feet known to swimmers as "treading water." Harry sprang to the oars, and by a few dexterous movements threw the canoe alongside of the Lynx, and at the next moment, the object of their prolonged solicitude was floundering in the bottom of the boat. The Indian followed, dripping like a drenched dog, yet excited to actual laughter by his achievement, which received the hearty plaudits of the whole company. The size of the fish, as nearly as could be ascertained, rather exceeded than fell short of Huntington's estimate; and Harry, gazing disconcertedly from it to his own diminutive prize, reluctantly conceded the merits of the "crooked hook."

But the amusement of the party was interrupted at its height by the startling announcement from the Huron that a canoe was visible several miles to the north, and by his earnest injunctions to the negro, who had possession of the oars, to pull rapidly for the shore, springing meanwhile himself to the tiller, and giving the desired direction to the boat. Every eye was strained to discover the object of alarm, but without effect, and Henrich, watching the earnest countenance of the Lynx, as the latter continued to gaze fixedly at the distant vessel, awaited his further communications without question. When their boat had approached within about thirty yards of the eastern shore, so as to be invisible from any great distance by reason of its dark background, the Lynx again changed its course to the north, and enjoined the negro not to abate his speed. He then rapidly explained his movements to Huntington; asking his counsel, and disclaiming any design to control the movements of his companions. To gain a position where, themselves being unseen, they could reconnoitre the stranger, was however too clearly a matter of prudence to require debate; the canoe might be one of Carlton's, and if so was to be pursued, it might be an enemy's, and in that case was of course to be shunned.

It was travelling in the same direction with themselves, not far from the middle of the river, and an hour's progress of the pursuers brought it into the view of the whole party, and enabled the Lynx to assert that it had three occupants. This announcement increased the general hope that it might prove to be part of the count's company, which, including himself, consisted of six, and was in two boats; and as the voyagers were now approaching the more dangerous part of their journey, the value of such a conjunction of forces could not well be over estimated. While this probability was discussed by Henrich and the ladies, the Indian gave confirmation to it by pointing out another boat, with the same number of inmates, a little in advance of its consort, but somewhat nearer the western shore, from the shadows of which it was just emerging.

"Then they are, indeed, our friends!" exclaimed Blanche, with animation, while a general joy pervaded the party; "there can no longer be a doubt: why should we not strike out at once into the middle of the stream, where we may ourselves be discovered?"

"We must be more certain," replied Henrich, "before making so hazardous a movement; a mistake here may be fatal; but we shall have farther tidings soon from the Lynx: see how his eyes are fixed: you may be sure his oracular voice will be heard again ere long."

A short time elapsed in silence, during which the sunlight from between some parting clouds fell upon the distant boats, and in the next minute the rudder under the Huron's guidance turned suddenly outward, throwing the bow of his vessel around towards the west, while a smile of satisfaction played across his countenance.

"Are you quite certain it is they?" asked Henrich, anxiously, as this decided movement was made.

"The Lynx can see," was the brief reply.

"Whom do you see, and what?"

"I see the Algonquin—the count—and the soldiers: they are six—they are no more—is it not enough?"

But the Indian's sagacity was slightly at fault; for when he had

brought his boat within the view of his distant friends, he had the mortification of seeing them, instead of waiting for, or turning to meet him, evidently proceeding on their course with increased speed. He had not made allowance for the circumstance, that the sunlight which revealed them so distinctly to him did not extend as far south as his own position; and that, although the Algonquin's vision was scarcely inferior to his own, he could probably distinguish nothing beyond the fact that there was a boat with five occupants following them. As there was nothing in this number which could identify the latter as their friends, the others would, of course, suppose them to be Iroquois, and would use their best efforts to widen the distance between them. The Huron now perceived that he ought to have remained in the marginal shadows of the river until he had attained a proximity to his friends, which, on emerging into the light, would distinctly reveal the character of his party.

There was no time, however, for vain regrets; the sun was within a few hours of its setting, and the night might separate the parties beyond the hope of uniting. An open chase would be probably useless, and the Lynx, explaining his intentions in a few words to Henrich, took a diagonal direction across the river, entirely to the western shore, hoping thus to allay suspicion, and give to his party the appearance of not being in pursuit. Having done this, he resumed his way within a few minutes, keeping close to the land, and being nearly certain that he was no longer observed by the count's party. On the preceding day he had considerably prepared a pair of rude paddles for the canoe, to be used in addition to the oars when safety required extraordinary speed, and these were now brought into service, although for a very different purpose from that for which they had been designed. They were handled by Henrich and the negro, the Huron himself taking the oars, while Blanche, with a little occasional instruction, guided the helm. The increased velocity thus obtained was very considerable; and, as the speed of the other boats had perceptibly diminished, the distance between the

parties was reduced, when the sun touched the horizon, to about half a mile.

It was unsafe to wait longer lest darkness should baffle their design, and suddenly quitting their obscurity the pursuers again darted out into the middle of the stream, when the Lynx, rising to his feet, extended his arms in gestures of friendly salutation. But it was without avail. The Algonquin was unfortunately in the forward boat, which had turned a bend in the river and disappeared from view, while the count and two of his men, who occupied the rear canoe, saw nothing but hostile demonstrations in the movements of their pursuers, and, following their companions, vanished also from sight.

Although disheartened by these frequent disappointments, the anxious voyagers did not intermit their efforts, and on reaching the bend in the river had the satisfaction to perceive that the rear boat of the fugitives, for such it is proper to call Carlton's company, was less than a quarter of a mile distant from them. The sun, however, was down, and in their haste to pass the intervening point, they had done so at a proximity to the shore which did not give them the full advantage even of the diminished light that remained. What was their consternation, while now exultingly sure of success, to behold one of the soldiers rise in the stern of his boat, and carefully aim his carabine towards them! A moment of horrible suspense ensued, during which the Lynx and Harry dropped to the bottom of the boat; and Henrich, conscious that there was no time to induce the ladies to follow their example, flung himself devotedly before Blanche, interposing his body as a shield for her protection. It was the work of an instant—a flash and report succeeded, and the heroic youth, staggering a few steps backwards, sank wounded to a seat.

The report of the weapon had not ceased vibrating on the ear, when the Lynx again had possession of the oars, and by a few lightning-like strokes impelled the canoe to a place of safety near the

shore ; having done which he sprang to the side of Henrich, about whom the other inmates of the vessel were already assembled.

“Speak to us, Mr. Huntington, for the love of Heaven,” exclaimed Blanche, kneeling before him with a face like marble ; “are you—are you badly hurt?”

“See to yourselves,” he whispered earnestly,—“they will fire again ! do not heed me—I am only scratched.”

As he spoke, however, he fell into the arms of the Huron, who, continuing to uphold him, directed Harry to bring the boat to land.

“He is dead !” said Blanche, wildly, “he is dead, Emily, and I am the cause ; oh, that we had never ventured upon this dreadful journey !”

“He is not dead,” replied Emily, seeking to give the encouragement she did not feel—“he has only fainted ;” and stooping to the brink of the river she dipped water with her hands, and threw it upon his face, but without effect ; “is it not so ?” she continued, addressing the Indian with tones of horror—“surely, surely he is not dead ?”

“We shall see,” replied the Lynx, rising as the boat touched the beach and gently lifting his friend, when Harry came to his aid and they bore their comrade to the shore, and laid him upon the grass. The motion revived him ; he opened his eyes, smiled re-assuringly, and asked for water, which was quickly brought.

“Do not be alarmed for me,” he said, as he observed the agonized expression of his friends ; “I believe my wound is slight, but I am losing some blood—it is in the left shoulder ; leave me with the Lynx and Harry ; the sight may distress you, and the Indian is a safe leech.”

Less in compliance with this request, than for the purpose of overcoming a tendency to faintness which she now became aware of, Blanche stepped to the water’s edge, followed by Emily, while the Lynx proceeded gently to divest Henrich of his coat and waistcoat.

Having done this, he dexterously cut the sleeve from the patient's shirt, and laid bare the wound, which proved to be in the upper part of the arm, near the shoulder; and, although bleeding profusely, the Indian at once pronounced it to be in no wise dangerous either to life or limb.

This opinion, in which Huntington placed as much confidence as if it had proceeded from a whole board of the medical faculty, he caused Harry at once to communicate to the ladies, greatly to their relief. The ball had, fortunately, passed out as well as in, and as bone and artery were untouched, nothing, evidently, but good care was needed to prevent serious consequences. Having carefully washed the wound, and taken means to avoid any unnecessary effusion of blood, the Lynx left Henrich in the charge of their companions, and proceeded to cull from his great medicine chest, the forest, some simple styptics with which to dress it. An hour, indeed, had not passed from the time of landing before the wounded man, nearly free from pain, and with but slightly diminished strength, was moving about among his friends, chatting gaily on the subject of his accident.

"There was really no occasion for fainting," he said; "but one is entitled, I suppose, to make something of an ado over his first wound; and then, to feel the blood running pretty freely without knowing exactly where it comes from, is rather startling; now, if the Lynx had received that hurt, I dare say we should have known nothing of it until we had stopped for the night, moored our boat, and eaten our supper; when he might possibly have asked for a patch or a bandage, like a child that has cut its finger; you must really excuse me, ladies, and I will try to be shot with a better grace next time."

CHAPTER XX.

“Over weedy fragments
 Thalaba went his way,
 Cautious he trod, and felt

The dangerous ground before him with his bow.

* * * *

The adder in her haunts disturbed,
 Lanced at the intruding staff her arrowy tongue.”—*Southey*.

THE time which had been lost to the voyagers by the accident last related was more than ordinarily precious. Every breath was removing their unconscious friends farther from them, and diminishing the chances of a junction of the parties; for it could scarcely be doubted that Carlton would travel without stopping during the night which had commenced. The Huron, however, seemed never without resource: he proposed, if his friends would spare him for the night, to follow the count by land, seeming confident, not only that he could overtake the boats, but that, having done so, he could communicate with the Algonquin from the shore, by a signal which the latter could not fail to comprehend.

The proposition seemed plausible, and after a little discussion was generally approved. The safety of the party, depending at all times more upon vigilance and the means of flight, than upon any power of resistance, was not materially diminished by the temporary withdrawal of the Indian, and a greater risk might properly have been encountered for the vast advantage which it promised. The twilight had entirely departed, but the moon, now several days old, with a thousand glimmering stars, afforded a light, which the Lynx

pronounced more suitable for his purpose than any other; and promising to return before sunrise he set out on his lonely journey.

"He's a fool, dat Lynch is," said Harry, making his appearance from a covert of bushes, which served as his kitchen, soon after the Indian's departure—"why he no wait for supper, fore he go tram-poosing 'bout de country all night? dare's de little bass a-most done, and part o' de oder; I clean 'em dreadful nice; ony smell;" and the grateful odor that came from the bushes fully justified the negro's raptures.

"Are you sure, Harry," asked Henrich, "that your fire cannot be seen from the outside?"

"Oh, yes, massa Henrich, de bush is mighty tick all around—more fear de Injuns smell 'em, golly!" he said, taking another relishing sniff.

Wearied and hungry, the travellers, indeed, were not backward in doing justice to their forest cheer, and Harry Bolt, although pertinaciously diligent in serving until Henrich and the ladies had supped, acquitted himself afterwards at his meal as if he thought the absence of the Lynx imposed upon him a double duty.

Count Carlton, in the meanwhile, was steadily pursuing his way, congratulating himself on the heroic manner in which he had beaten off a canoe-load of armed Iroquois, and anticipating the glowing colors in which the achievement would shine, if he were fortunate enough ever again to set foot in Castle Montaigne. Four hours after his victory, he pressed unremittingly forward, not failing to remind his men that if he left the enemy in possession of the battle-ground, it was not of necessity, but quite as a matter of policy.

"It was doubtless a chief who fell, Mallory," he said, insinuatingly, to the man who had fired, "judging by his dress and air, you know?"

"Yes,—certainly,—there cannot be a doubt," replied the man, speaking, as his officer had addressed him, in French—"and I think

he was just preparing to fire when I peppered him—he was standing up, you know.”

“Certainly, and then they flew so quickly to cover, which they would not have done if it had been only a common man that was killed—ah, yes, it was a chief.”

But if Carlton triumphed, he was far from being at ease, for he feared he should have a full fleet of boats upon him before he could extricate himself from so dreadfully hostile a region. Some rest, however brief, was absolutely necessary to his men, who had toiled for many hours, and at about midnight he encamped upon an islet, not greatly larger than his canoes, situated about a third of a mile from the eastern shore. In this defensible position, he allotted two hours to repose, and the Algonquin, who had not shared in the brilliant engagement of the evening, was his sentinel.

Scarcely an hour later, the Lynx, rapidly threading the mazes of the forest, arrived at a point on the main land about opposite to the camp, whence he discovered the island and saw its adaptation to the very purpose for which it had been used. Knowing, however, the count's timidity, he scarcely indulged the hope that the latter had stopped, and it was almost without checking his own progress, that he placed his hands beside his mouth, and sent across the water a long shrill cry, peculiar to a bird of the northern forest. The Algonquin, like his friend, was awake to every sight and sound that reached his senses, while journeying through a hostile land, but more especially now, when he had reason to hope that his deserted brother was following his lost companions, and seeking to rejoin them. There was nothing preconcerted in the signal, but Anak did not fail to recognise the sound as one which, familiar in his own forests, he had not heard elsewhere since leaving home; he leaped, therefore, to the conclusion that his friend was at hand, and immediately returned the call by one precisely similar. Delighted at this unexpected result, the Lynx, to avoid any mistake, repeated the cry,

with some change of intonation, and again the answer came back like an echo from the island.

The overjoyed sentinel hastened to communicate his discovery to the count, who both astonished and gratified, at once despatched a boat to the shore to bring off his ally, and in a short time the Huron was in the camp, receiving the heartiest congratulations of his friends. His story was soon told, to the inexpressible amazement of his hearers, for although his words were addressed to the count, his delighted companions, listening and questioning, had thronged, unreprieved, around him.

Carlton's dominant feeling was joy at the arrival of Miss Montaigne, and in this emotion was merged, for the time, every sense of shame and mortification which his own pusillanimity, in contrast with the heroism of her real defenders, seemed calculated to inspire. To return successful to Castle Montaigne, was the great object of his ambition; this being done, he felt himself fully competent to guard his reputation, and appropriate to himself the principal credit of the achievement. Success, he knew, would cancel all errors, for no one would look critically into an affair which had terminated with *éclat*. His report to the baron, too, while it vindicated his own valor, and with ingenious coloring made cowardice pass for prudence, he resolved should flatter his few followers by encomiums on themselves into the fullest acquiescence with his story. Half of them indeed, cajoled by his arts, might already be said both to see and hear rather with the senses of their leader than with their own; and if the Indians should prove more impracticable, they at least were men of few words, who would be little apt to thwart his views. As to the ladies, when did a Frenchman ever distrust his power to fascinate and control the mind of Beauty; here, at least, his triumph would be complete in every respect.

Such were the thoughts of Count Carlton, as, with rapid flight, they embraced, even while the Lynx was speaking, the leading fea-

tures of his new position and prospects. One circumstance alone had not entered into his calculations, because he had not fully comprehended the Huron's story, and that was the presence of a young American gentleman among the escort of the ladies.

"You say there are a couple of negroes with you, sachem, eh?" he said, "one of whom we have been unfortunate enough to shoot: he is not mortally wounded, I hope?"

The Lynx explained with some difficulty, yet failed to convey to Carlton's mind any distinct idea of his companion, or of the nature of his connexion with the party.

"They will, doubtless, want our escort as far as Fort Albany," he continued, "when they shall be remunerated and dismissed; from there they will easily find their way home."

No time was now lost in embarking, and seeking out, under the guidance of the Huron, the retreat of his late companions. The sun, indeed, was not risen when Henrich, who was the sentinel of his party, perceived the returning canoes with emotions which he did not care to analyze, but in which joy did not certainly preponderate. He immediately communicated the intelligence to the ladies, in whose extreme delight he found additional cause for discontent; and when next he proceeded to the beach, to receive the approaching party, it was only with a strong effort that he overcame his feelings sufficiently to admit of his usual frank and open deportment.

Nothing could be more striking than the contrast in the appearance of Carlton and Huntington, as the first, seated in the leading canoe, approached the shore, and the latter, standing at the water's edge, with one hand resting lightly on his gun, waited to meet him. The count was a man of about twenty-eight years, less in stature than Henrich, but in figure equally faultless. His countenance, dark, but not unhandsome, was marred by a sinister expression, which, to a ready reader of the human visage, was as legible as print, but which, softened by an attractive smile, was easily over-

looked. His eyes were perfectly black and very small, possessing, of themselves, no other expression than that of acuteness and cunning, while his forehead, large enough for beauty, yet not for intellect, was shaded by clustering hair of the same raven hue. There was an abiding air of conceit, not only in his face, but in every movement of his person; and this it was, perhaps, more than anything else, that constituted the repulsive part of his appearance, and negatived, in a great degree, all his personal advantages. Henrich's countenance approached to some of the nobler models of Grecian manly beauty; and if it had a fault, it was the almost feminine whiteness and texture of his skin. His expression was placid and gentle, but there was a latent fire in his large blue eyes, which kindled his countenance, at times, with a strange animation, and gave token of unrevealed energies of character.

The eyes of the young men were riveted upon each other as the boat drew near to land; surprise being plainly depicted upon Carlton's countenance, accompanied by a supercilious and authoritative air, while on Henrich's a slight disturbance of his natural expression scarcely hinted at the anxious feelings which had taken possession of his breast. The count had not yet landed when he addressed Huntington in a sharp, quick voice, with the inquiry whether he spoke the French language, to which the latter, greatly to the astonishment of the other, replied in the affirmative, giving at the same time the best proof of his assertion, by the fluency and well-modulated accent of his words. He next demanded, whether the ladies who were in his charge were safe, and where they were to be found; and without further heed of Henrich, after receiving his reply, stepped upon the shore and passed to their presence.

Miss Montaigne's education in her father's language had, of course, not been neglected, and she was able to converse in it, not only with facility, but with elegance, while even Emily had taken pains to acquire some knowledge of a dialect, which would be so necessary in her future abode. The count, therefore, found no

difficulty in introducing himself, which he did with much ease and grace; and relating the commission bestowed upon him by Baron Montaigne, inquired, with needless ceremony, whether the ladies were willing to put themselves under his charge. To this Blanche, of course, replied affirmatively, briefly explaining the causes which had induced her to set out under a different escort, and not forgetting to bespeak the count's favor for Mr. Huntington, a young gentleman to whose good offices, as she pointedly remarked, she was indebted for her rescue, and probably for the preservation of her life. Gall and wormwood are usually considered somewhat bitter commodities, but they would have been sweet to the Frenchman's taste, compared with these first words from the beautiful lips of his expected bride. He replied, however, with perfect complaisance; and on being more directly introduced to Henrich by Miss Montaigne, extended his hand to that young man with a condescending air, which seemed to imply a sense of having fully remunerated, by such an act of grace, all the services of the other.

A morning meal was now prepared from the ample stores of the count, in which even the luxuries of fruit and wine were not wanting; and after another hour devoted to the repose of the men, the whole party prepared to re-embark. The larger of Carlton's canoes had been fitted up with some attempt at elegance, for the accommodation of its expected guests, and to this vessel he gave the more pretending name of barge, a word common to the English and French languages. It was, of course, to this boat that Blanche and Emily were conducted by their new friend; and whatever reluctance the former might have experienced at any seeming slight being thus offered to Huntington, there seemed no means compatible with maidenly delicacy of avoiding it. She could neither ask to continue in Henrich's canoe, nor request his presence in the count's; but it was enough for her generous friend that her eye met his with an apologetic glance as she stepped into the barge, and that, unless

indeed an eager fancy had misled him, a slight suffusion of color tinged, at the same moment, her beautiful cheeks.

There was food for hope, in these gentle tokens so unwittingly bestowed, and Henrich took fresh courage under circumstances which seemed far from favorable. "She is at least grateful and noble-hearted," he thought, as he turned to his deserted boat, "she cannot but know my aspirations, and she does not utterly discourage them! What can she more? it is enough—if she loves me, she may yet be mine, despite this haughty count."

Two of the soldiers propelled the barge, making its occupants, five in number; a third was with the Indians in the Lynx's boat, and the fourth, at the Huron's request, too openly made to admit of its being refused, was permitted to assist in conducting Henrich's canoe. Thus they proceeded on their way, with some vicissitudes and alarms, but with no serious molestation, until about noon, when the Indians having given notice that they were within a few leagues of Fort Albany, they encamped in a dense wood to wait for the night.

Admitted once more to the society of his friends, after his seemingly long exile, Henrich recovered his natural buoyant spirits which imparted themselves by contagion to Blanche and Emily, who passed from the ceremonious politeness which had marked their deportment to the count, to the opposite extreme of unreserve and hilarity. The dislike with which Carlton already regarded Huntington grew rapidly under such fostering influences into positive hatred; and although the very excess of his *hauteur* prevented him from manifesting his displeasure, he could not keep from his countenance the shadows of those malign clouds which were passing across his heart. This new offence was not, indeed, needed to produce a result already predetermined by the count, but it gave zest to his contemplated act, and caused it, perhaps, to be invested with some added aggravations.

It was with surprise, though without suspicion, when the time for re-embarking arrived, that Henrich beheld some singular changes in the order of departure. The barge was despatched first, and was already well under way before either of the other boats was permitted to start; the Lynx's canoe was shoved from her moorings, and lay with extended oars awaiting the signal to move, while, strangest of all, the Lynx had taken the count's station in the barge, and the latter stood alone upon the beach. He did not stand long, but having watched the foremost vessel for some minutes, turned and walked rapidly towards Henrich, whom he addressed with elaborate politeness.

"We shall pass Fort Albany, Mr. Huntington, before we again halt; where you will be enabled to join your countrymen in safety; you have my thanks and those of the ladies for your services and good conduct, which shall be represented to General Montaigne. Whatever wages your man will accept, I shall be happy in behalf of the baron to pay, having done which, I shall have the honor to bid you farewell."

Henrich listened to these words with the utmost astonishment, but he remembered some ominous looks of his companion, which he had encountered during the afternoon, and suspected, without seeming to do so, the deeper meaning involved.

"Count Carlton will excuse me," he said; "I have no design of withdrawing from Miss Montaigne's escort, or of ceasing to be one of her defenders until she reaches Castle Montaigne; it was with this intention that I left home."

"If such is your desire," replied the Frenchman, "I regret extremely that I shall not be able to gratify it; I have no authority to introduce strangers into Castle Montaigne, or its precincts, especially from an enemy's borders."

"You shall not have that responsibility, Sir Count," answered Henrich promptly; "I shall venture upon the French domains at

my own risk, and shall not trespass, I assure you, uninvited, on Baron Montaigne's hospitality."

"Mr. Huntington has certainly the right to invade his most Christian Majesty's dominions, single-handed, if he desires," replied Carlton, somewhat tartly, "but he must not expect me to be accessory to such an enterprise. To be brief, sir, for time presses, you will cease to be connected with my party, on reaching Fort Albany."

"I shall not cease to *accompany* it, sir," said Henrich, haughtily, "while Miss Montaigne forms one of its members, unless at her bidding; I do not resign my charge so lightly."

The Frenchman's voice trembled with suppressed passion, when he again spoke, but the remembrance that he was in the midst of a hostile country, and that he was acting in direct contravention of Miss Montaigne's wishes, tempered his language.

"I am sorry to say," he responded, "that you will even cease to accompany it. The present number of my men and boats was fixed after mature deliberation, as the one best calculated for the success of my mission; to increase the number of the vessels one half, and of men, by the addition of two, would be a wide departure from my instructions, and I repeat it, cannot be permitted; you, yourself, must perceive the additional risk it would cause of drawing an enemy upon us."

"Count Carlton," answered Henrich, "if these objections have really any weight, they can be obviated: I will dismiss my man and boat opposite the fort, and will proceed in the Lynx's canoe; otherwise—the river is a broad one, and I know of no one who has the right to forbid my navigating it. For myself, I am confident that the presence of myself and my man, even in a third boat, will add to the safety of the ladies; and my continuing of your party will, therefore, become a question of speed."

"It may become a question of strength, young man," answered Carlton in a low threatening voice.

“It may, indeed,” said Henrich, dauntlessly, and with irrepressible wrath; “we are but two to seven, and you may possibly succeed in adding our murder to your already brilliant achievements; but we *are* two to seven, and, believe me, we will not fall alone.”

Goaded to madness by treatment at once so unjust and despicable, Henrich's whole soul breathed a spirit of the most perfect defiance; he stood in the faint moonlight, proudly erect, with eyes that flashed like meteors, unable for the moment to restrain the ebullitions of his rage. Yet the folly of his threatened defence became apparent to him, even as he ceased speaking; for the safety of Blanche was the paramount object of his consideration, and he could, of course, engage in no actual contest with her defenders. The threat, however, was not without its effect; the count, unused to such an exhibition of feeling, stood for a moment awed by the furious spirit which he had evoked; he looked hastily over his shoulder to make sure that his men were within call, and then turned to reply; the subdued tone of his voice and the mildness of his language giving no token of the malevolence which now boiled within his breast.

“You are hasty, Mr. Huntington,” he said,—“unnecessarily so, I think: if you desire a seat in the Lynx's boat, you are entirely welcome to it; but let us waste no more time, the barge is already well advanced, and we must hasten to overtake her.”

“You grant all that I require,” returned Henrich, now also speaking mildly, and fearing that he had exhibited an unwarranted passion; while he hesitated, ingenuously considering whether any retraction or explanation was proper in return for the concession of the count, the latter again reminded him of the necessity of haste. He accordingly explained the new state of affairs to Harry, whom he furnished with money and instructed to proceed at once to Albany, and remain there until some descending sloop should afford him the means of returning in safety to New York. He also enjoined upon the negro the strictest secrecy in regard to everything

connected with the escape of Miss Montaigne ; and giving him some kindly messages to the venerable Jacobus, bade him a cordial farewell. Huntington's gun and portmanteau were then quickly transferred to the other canoe, which immediately started, followed at some distance by the boat of the solitary African.

CHAPTER XXI.

“ O monstrous treachery ! can this be so !
 That in alliance, amity, and oaths
 There should be found such false dissembling guile ?”

—*First part of King Henry 8th.*

CANDOR is ever the victim of guile. Suspicious of no artifice, Henrich had placed himself unreservedly in the power of an enemy, to whose frigid heart relentings were as unwont as thaws amidst polar ice. Making no attempt to overtake the barge, which maintained its advanced position of about half a mile, the count proceeded slowly and cautiously on his way, following the Lynx's route, and hugging the eastern shore as he approached the English settlement. He spoke but seldom, and not at all to Huntington, who attributed his reserve less to uncooled wrath than to the desire of maintaining the silence necessary to their situation.

They passed Albany a little after midnight, slightly accelerating their progress, as it was a vicinity of unusual danger ; and this might have been a sufficient reason for the count's proceeding yet five weary hours longer without a halt, and without any communication with the forward boat. Yet it was thought strange, when at sunrise he ordered the Algonquin to steer for the land, that no word or signal was passed to the barge, nay, that the distance between the vessels had been allowed materially to widen, and that a time was chosen for stopping when the other boat was entirely out of view. It was strange in seeming ; but when Henrich caught the eye of Carlton as they drew near the shore he read a picture of

malignant triumph in its flash, which revealed at once the whole fearful secret. The grating of the keel upon the pebbled beach was accompanied by the harsh, quick voice of the Frenchman, into which a tone of defiant determination was thrown.

“We leave you at last, Mr. Huntington,” he said, “and we shall see whether my authority to control my own party is still to be disputed.”

“It is impossible,” exclaimed Henrich, in accents husky with horror and wrath, “that you can contemplate such an atrocity. I am here at your bidding; your faith is pledged for my security; reposing on that, I have parted with my attendant, and also with the only means of safety in this wilderness, my boat.”

“It would be safe to leave so valorous a man in possession of neither,” replied Carlton; “it is untrue that I have given you any pledge; my little stratagem, indeed, was almost of your own suggestion. I said that you were welcome to a seat in this boat; and, indeed, so you were, most heartily; but I did not say, I believe, how far your voyage in it should extend.”

“Count Carlton, this is ——”

“Enough,—enough, sir; I have no disposition to argue the matter,” said Carlton, taking snuff with an air of perfect *nonchalance*; “you will have ample time for vituperation on shore; he may rail, you know, who loses. Joseph, assist the gentleman to the beach.”

The man who was addressed seized the portmanteau of Huntington, and bore it to the shore; and while the latter was again about to remonstrate, the low voice of the Algonquin, who sat nearest him, reached his ears; but scarcely a few rapid words of the Indian were uttered, when he was interrupted by the stern glance of the officer. Anak, however, undertook to intercede for the young man, but was at once silenced by the count. “I will hear nothing,” he said; “and the man who speaks for him shall be put under arrest,—we have had words enough. Now, sir, are you ready?”

“Count Carlton,” exclaimed Henrich, still unwilling to abandon a

hope that some returning sense of justice would actuate the latter, "I may not descend to entreaty, but let me appeal once more to your sense of honor. You are ——"

"Young man," said Carlton, not unwilling to add the sting of taunts, to his act, "I have said that all words are useless; your conduct would justify me in far harsher measures, which I forbear in consideration of some slight assistance you are said to have given the Lynx in rescuing Miss Montaigne; but your presumption has more than cancelled your services, and your actual mutiny, since being attached to my company, is deserving of death; go, therefore, and remember that you owe your life to my clemency."

"I could commit no mutiny in disobeying orders to which I was never subject; I claimed but the right to navigate this highway of nature with my own boat and by my own hands. What are the means by which you seek to prevent me? Let me say, that the extreme resort to which you have alluded would have been far more becoming an officer of the French army."

"If you prefer such an alternative, you may, perhaps, even yet succeed in procuring it," said the count; "but I spare you. And now, sir, once more I must remind you that I have no time for argument; you can continue your remarks, if you please, upon the shore, and will pardon us, I hope, if we should not feel ourselves at leisure to remain your auditors."

Further expostulation was evidently useless, and Henrich passed to the bow of the boat for the purpose of landing. In doing so, he came close to the count, who was also standing, and paused for a moment, confronting him, while a sudden pallor marked the countenance of the latter.

"I go," said Huntington, "but not without proclaiming you the coward and villain which your acts have proved."

Saying so, he stepped to the shore.

"You will tempt me to follow you with a brace of balls, if you

are not wary," said Carlton, breathing freer, as he saw that no personal violence was attempted. "Push off, my boys!"

"I do not think you dare even do that!" answered Henrich, wrought to that desperation which sees no terror in death, and drawing at the same time a pistol from his belt; he stood scarce six feet from his adversary, as he spoke, and the latter, utterly cowed by the words and manner of Huntington, forbore reply until the moving boat had placed a distance of several additional yards between them.

"You hold your life lightly, young man," he said, at length, while the canoe continued to recede; "it is well for you that others have more regard for it."

Huntington made no response; he was incapable of descending to mere vituperation, and the fervor of wrath was already giving way to the painful consciousness of his position.

Carlton continued his voyage three additional hours, at the end of which time his party were permitted to stop on the eastern shore for repose. With smiling visage and unusual blandness of demeanor, he here rejoined the ladies, and apologized for his temporary separation from them, alleging that the desire of occupying the post of danger, in case of pursuit from the fort, had induced him to proceed in the second boat; and that, his apprehensions of peril from that source being now past, he should resume his former place.

Blanche and Emily gave no evidence of requiring to be appeased, but replied, as usual, with politeness. They looked occasionally down the river for Henrich's canoe, but supposing it to be at hand, made no direct inquiry, until, their morning meal being in readiness, they were invited, as usual, by the count, to partake of it.

"You forget that our company are not yet all present," replied Blanche, glancing again towards the river; "Mr. Huntington will think lightly of our civility, if we commence our meal before he arrives."

"You remind me of my omissions," returned Carlton; "I forgot

to inform you that we have parted company with your friend, and that I am charged with his adieux to yourself and Miss Roselle——”

“His adieux! Mr. Huntington’s adieux!” exclaimed Blanche, unguardedly, and with a look of utter astonishment, not unblended with a bitterer feeling; “you surely are jesting, Count Carlton; he could not have left us without bidding us farewell in person.”

“I do not jest,” the count replied, adding, with a sarcastic tone, “but if I had dreamed of the intelligence being so unpleasant to Miss Montaigne, I would have divulged it less abruptly,”

“It is unpleasant, indeed,” answered Blanche, “to believe that Mr. Huntington could have been capable of so much incivility; perhaps, however, there is some explanation, and I have judged him harshly.”

“There is an explanation, I believe, to the benefit of which he is entitled, if any is necessary,” responded Carlton. “When we embarked, last evening, he doubtless expected to see you again; he was not, I believe, aware that we were so near Albany, which, as the northernmost English settlement, and one which will afford him the means of a safe return to his home, was, you will perceive, very appropriately his stopping-place.”

“I am happy that he has grown so prudent,” said Blanche, smiling, and fearful that she had exhibited too deep an interest in the event; “we will proceed, if you please, to our meal.”

Anxious to repair the error of a moment of surprise, Miss Montaigne preserved a forced vivacity of spirits during the remainder of their stay upon shore, and it was not until they were once more embarked, that she dared recur in thought to a subject which proved so exciting to her mind. She had never analyzed her sentiments towards Henrich, and knew little in reality, even at this moment, of their true character; but whatever they might be, she was both mortified and grieved at his conduct, which remained inexplicable, save by the merest conjecture. Generous in her judgments, her vacillating thoughts settled, at length, upon the conviction that she had given

him cause for serious offence, and she resolved not to add to his wrongs by censuring his manly resentment. A still more painful apprehension, which at times displaced her more settled opinion, was, that the very wound which he had received in her defence, aggravated by exposure and fatigue, had compelled him to desert the party for the purpose of seeking medical aid in the settlement which they had passed. Whichever of these views she adopted, it was coupled with the conviction that she should never meet her benefactor again, nor be able to repair her injustice towards him; and this reflection, if not her only source of disquiet, was the only one which her self-respect would allow her to recognise.

The last prolonged stage of the voyagers' journey had rendered a corresponding proportion of rest necessary to them, and it was now nearly noon when they again resumed their way. While they had remained encamped, Carlton had been haunted by some vague fears that Henrich might follow and overtake them still, if it were only to make known his wrongs to those of the party who had so much reason to be his friends. How such a useless feat could be accomplished, even if Huntington had had the hardihood to undertake it, he did not pause to reflect; for he had warily landed upon the opposite shore from that on which he had deserted Henrich, and in a place admitting of close seclusion from any distant view; but it was only now, when his barge was again gliding rapidly forward, that he became altogether free from apprehension.

His next stage was nearly as long as the one preceding, and was made with equal rapidity; for he was resolved to incur no further danger of re-union with his rival. Eight hours he proceeded with a happy consciousness that not even an Indian pedestrian could have made equal progress among the impediments of a pathless wilderness, much less a man unused to forest life. It was only when night had again descended upon the earth, that he ventured to take such full repose as the wearied energies of his men required; he encamped near the point where his route, leaving the Hudson,

entered an adjacent creek, and led eastward to Lake George; or to give that beautiful sheet of water the benefit of all its names, Christian, practical, and poetical, Lake Horicon, or the Lake of the Holy Sacrament.

CHAPTER XXII.

“ O'er the glimmering wave he hied him,
Where the *Buzford* reared her sail,
With three thousand ghosts beside him,
And in groans did *Vernou* hail.”—*Richard Glover*.

It was near sunset on the day succeeding the events last related, that the travellers, having gained Lake George in safety, were passing near a prominent cape or headland on its eastern shore, when the apparition of a solitary Indian, standing motionless upon its summit, attracted general attention, and excited no little alarm. He was evidently watching the approaching party; and, as his elevated position exhibited his tall, manly figure in distinct relief against the sky, it seemed to assume vaster proportions than those of humanity, and awakened superstitious fears in some of the beholders.

“ It's such a sight as I have been looking for,” said Mallory, in a mysterious whisper to one of his fellow-soldiers; “ this is called the haunted lake, and these high hills have been for ages the burying-place of the Indians: look closely and you'll see him fade into mist in a moment, and float away.”

“ After which,” replied Francis, to whom these words had been addressed, “ we may look for thunder and lightning, I suppose; it may be as you say, but ghosts don't often carry guns, and yonder fellow, if I am not mistaken, has one which might trouble us, even at this distance, if he chose to use it.”

“ It's mere vapor, I tell you,” responded the other, more earnestly,

“like their spirit canoes, which are often seen at midnight on these very waters; why, when the great Iroquois chief, Whirlwind, was killed, many years ago, in the first battle with the old Marquis Vaudreuil, who was in his prime then, the sachem’s body was carried down this lake, by night, in a canoe, followed by not more than a dozen real boats,—for his men were cut up, and scattered, like foxes in the forest; but, sir, those who saw it told me, with lips whiter than yonder foam, there was a fleet of canoes in that procession which no man could number; it reached from shore to shore, besides being miles in length, and every one was filled with forms which held up wailing hands, and their sighs swelled into a breeze that shook the lake till it rocked like a cradle: they were the dead warriors of the nation for many generations.”

“It may be so,” again responded Francis, more seriously; “at any rate, it won’t do to make fun of Satan in his own territory; if he sees fit to give these Iroquois ghosts a furlough, now and then, to attend the funeral of a friend, why that’s his business and none of mine; but as to this gentleman on the hill——”

“Holy mother!—he’s gone!” interrupted Mallory, gazing with a look of fear upon the spot so suddenly vacated,—“and as I told you,—into the air; I think it grows darker, and the wind comes strangely here off the shore—hark!—was not that thunder?”

“It may be so—there has been a heavy cloud in the south-west this last half hour.”

“Aye—aye—ever since *he* made his appearance; and, perhaps, by this time he is on its back, guiding it down the lake, as if he had bit and bridle upon it; thanks to St. Francis, we are not far from shore—but what will that avail us? we may be in the middle of the lake in a twinkling—aye, and at the bottom of it, too.”

If the phantom of the hill had anything to do with the storm which was now springing up, it was a spirit of no little potency. The cloud which Francis had pointed out, rose rapidly towards the zenith, followed by successive layers of the same tenebrious hue,

which seemed to unfold themselves from some exhaustless treasury beneath the horizon, and which expanded in every direction, with no apparent diminution of their density. As the black canopy came sailing northward the wave grew darker in its path, and the rippling waters in the distance told that the wind was brushing their surface, and waking them into life; the lightning began to dart in long chain-like streaks across the sky, and the moaning thunder came faintly as yet, but threateningly to the ear.

While Carlton, environed between two varieties of peril, hesitated what course to pursue, the increasing fury of the storm scarcely left him the privilege of a choice. The darkness almost of night was gathering around him; the wind had become a gale, and was violently rocking his boats; the lake was rolling in long ridge-like undulations; while the electrical flashes, prolonged and painfully vivid, were followed, or rather accompanied by detonations, which now in stunning cannon-like reports, and now in long bellowing peals, shook the air with little intermission, and added an awful sublimity to the scene. The alarmed ladies implored to be taken to the shore; and Carlton, scarcely less disconcerted, issued the necessary orders for that purpose; but as the boats, guided with difficulty, were progressing slowly towards the nearest beach, there was the sound of a terrific explosion seemingly in their very path, shaking the waters like an earthquake, and a towering oak, riven to its base, fell quivering across the margin of the lake. Shrieks of alarm arose from the ladies, and Mallory, dropping his oar, fell upon his knees, calling on a hundred saints for help, and pointing at intervals of his hasty prayers towards the hill.

“I said it!—I said it! St. Francis defend us! he’s there again, —see—see, he’s calling for another thunderbolt, and pointing towards us: St. James and St. Peter, *orate pro nobis!*”

All eyes were turned towards the hill, where a singular sight, indeed, was beheld, which, to the excited imagination of the spectators, seemed almost to justify the fears of the soldier. The Indian

had re-appeared nearly at the spot which he had occupied when first discovered, but he was no longer motionless as before ; on the contrary, he was making the most frantic gestures, throwing his arms violently into the air, now singly and now together, and anon pointing towards the forest, nearly in the direction of the fallen tree. A long, whistling call was at the same moment heard from the Lynx's boat, which had been following the barge at a short remove ; and, on turning to learn its meaning, the count discovered that the canoe had turned back, and was proceeding rapidly towards the centre of the lake. Utterly bewildered by these strange events, he hesitated what course to pursue ; he was within thirty yards of the land, and was drifting, by the action of the waves, rapidly nearer ; the shrill whistling continued from his friends, followed now by loud calls and shouts ; the gestures of the lone Indian grew more violent ; and ere he had decided aught, twenty Iroquois warriors sprang from a covert, and rushed to the water's edge.

It was a moment of unmitigated horror. Francis and Mallory, unordered, regained their oars, and brought the boat quickly around ; but several of the savages had rushed meanwhile into the shallow water, with the view of seizing the vessel and forcing it to the land, while others, with presented weapons, stood on the beach waiting the issue of the attempt. There seemed no possible escape ; the count, whose hands alone were disengaged, appeared paralyzed with fear, and unconscious that there were three loaded guns lying at his feet ; and, to add to the terror of the moment, the tall Indian on the hill, who was now supposed to be the leader of the band, was seen taking deliberate aim with his rifle, apparently towards the barge. A flash and report succeeded ; but instead of the shot harming the fugitives, as they fully expected, the foremost savage was seen suddenly to leap upwards and fall back into the lake, crimsoning its surface with his blood. A howl of fury arose from his comrades, who turned quickly around to look for their unknown enemy ; but the spot where he had stood was vacant, although the smoke of his gun

was yet curling around it. At the next instant a shot issued from the Lynx's boat, which also proved fatal to one of the assailants, the remainder of whom, finding themselves, as they supposed, between two parties of their foes, hastened back to their cover, to plan some safer mode of attack.

Ignorant how numerous or how near might be the party in their rear, they were fortunately afraid to expend their fire upon the retreating barge, the occupants of which could otherwise scarcely have escaped complete destruction. Still, one of the few balls which were discharged towards them slightly wounded Francis, and a second pierced the boat scarcely a foot from where Carlton was crouching to avoid the dreaded missiles. Blanche and Emily, being in the fore part of the vessel, were partly sheltered by the oarsmen, by whose advice they had taken a recumbent and comparatively unexposed position. It was many minutes, however, before the boat attained a safe offing, and occasional shots continued to be fired from the shore, and returned by the Lynx and Algonquin; but the roughness of the water and the dancing motion of the canoes, preventing any distinct aim in either direction, rendered them innocuous.

The storm was still raging, although, in view of the greater peril, it had been for some minutes nearly unnoticed by the voyagers; but, like most sudden tempests, its fury was soon expended, and the boats were enabled to effect a junction for the purpose of consultation on future movements. The companions met, deeply impressed with a sense of the danger they had so narrowly escaped, and of that which still impended over them; for they were yet more than a hundred miles from the southern line of the French territory, and the war party which was now on their track was evidently of a most formidable character.

"How was it," asked Carlton of the Lynx, "that you became aware of the ambuscade at so timely a moment?"

"Did you not see him?" responded the Huron; "the Indian on the hill, warning us to keep off the shore?"

“Ah, yes; I remember now that his gestures were those of warning, though he seemed like some madman at the time, and he did us vast service with his gun; but who can he be, and how is it that he befriends us?”

The Lynx replied that he might be some stray hunter from the north—a Huron, perhaps, or Algonquin—and that if so, he would doubtless join them before morning.

Night was fast closing in, and the anxious countenances of Blanche and Emily showed that they looked forward to its events with the most painful forebodings. Miss Montaigne experienced that fearful sinking of the spirits which seems like a presentiment of calamity; she had felt, ever since Huntington's departure, such utter loneliness as the absence of one only congenial companion in the hour of adversity is calculated to produce; but now, when unwonted perils were besetting her, how would her desolate heart have welcomed the presence of one whose courage and hope were so exuberant and so contagious, and whose single arm had seemed like a very host for her defence. Bitter and irrepressible tears were Blanche's, welling profusely from a heart which, whatever had been its previous lessons of suffering, had now found “in lowest depths a lower deep” of grief.

The consultation resulted in a decision to retrace their route and proceed towards the south until the darkness should conceal their movements, when they would resume their northward course, scarcely expecting, however, thus to deceive an enemy to whom wiles and artifices were the familiar events of life. Their chief hope consisted in the probability that their pursuers were unprovided with boats; for, if such was the case, the voyagers could set them quite at defiance during that part of their journey which was confined to the lakes. But between the Horicon and Champlain was an interval of several miles, which was to be traversed by means of a narrow creek, and the passage would be rendered trebly perilous by the necessity of vacating their canoes at several points and dragging them across

the shallow and unnavigable stream. The existence of this trap-like locality was, of course, well known to the Iroquois warriors, and little doubt could be entertained that they would seek to avail themselves of its advantages.

It had been a question with the fugitives, for a moment, whether they should not avoid an instant's loss of time, and set out openly for the foot of the lake, with a view of outstripping their pursuers, and passing the dangerous strait before the latter could reach it; but it was believed that the contemplated *ruse* would render the enemy sufficiently uncertain of their route to compel a division of his forces, and thus render a conflict, if it could not be avoided, less unequal. The night, too, was deepening so rapidly that little delay could be occasioned by the experiment, and the darkness promised to be such as to be a serious impediment to the foe in their march through the woods. Acting upon the plan which had been concerted, the travellers proceeded southward about half an hour, at the end of which time, the evening being sufficiently advanced to hide their movements, they again changed their course, and rowed rapidly but silently down the lake.

The boats kept near each other, and when they came opposite the scene of their recent danger, the Lynx obtained permission to approach towards the shore and make an effort to bring off the mysterious hunter who had rendered them such signal service, and who, it was thought, might have valuable intelligence to impart. Great caution was necessary in this attempt, and the count indulged but little hope of its success; not so, however, his oarsmen, who knew more of Indian tactics.

"He'll find him, sir,—the Lynx will," said Francis, who, in times of unusual excitement, expressed an occasional opinion without reproof; "he'll find him, sir, as if it were daylight; there's a sort of free-masonry among them, sir, as I told you; by and by you'll hear a whip-po-will, mayhap, or a tree-toad, or perhaps only a cricket's chirp, and it will be answered on the shore,—and there he is, sir,—

and he'll plunge into the lake and swim out to the boat, croaking now and then like a bull-frog, to show his course ; ah, they're cute fellows, these savages are, sir ; there's a sort of free-masonry among them, as I said, sir."

Francis's predictions did not prove to be incorrect ; whatever had been the means resorted to by the Lynx to accomplish his purpose, he rejoined the barge in a short time accompanied by the stranger, who proved, he said, to be a Huron hunter, known as the Beaver, and who brought the alarming intelligence that the whole band of the Iroquois had set out for the outlet of the lake. The haste and excitement which this information occasioned left little time for attention to its bearer, who conversed only in an Indian dialect, and whom the count did not, in consequence, personally question.

CHAPTER XXIII.

“ —— Through the trees fierce eyeballs glowed,
Dark human forms in moonshine showed,
Wild from their native wilderness,
With painted limbs and battle dress !” — *Whittier*.

A NIGHT of excessive anxiety, of frequent alarms, and of the most wearying labor at the oars, brought the travellers near the northern extremity of the lake, not, as they had hoped, while it was yet dark, but just as the grey twilight of morning was diffusing itself over the landscape. A fearful uncertainty prevailed as to the position of the enemy, and a dread that, having outstripped the boats, they might be already in possession of the dangerous pass. That they had followed, or preceded the voyagers, night-long, upon the shore, like a pack of untiring wolves, no doubt was entertained. It would have been hazardous, however, to lose, by inaction, their probable advantage of precedence in the race, and it was resolved to press forward with caution.

The canoe containing the Indians took the advance, and never were eyes more faithfully used than were those of these vigilant men, which seemed to pierce the very depths of the forest on every side, overlooking nothing, and never, for an instant, relaxing their scrutiny. But everything was quiet. They approached, and glided silently into the creek, favored by its current, and hoping soon to float freely upon the broad bosom of the lower lake. For a few miles they proceeded rapidly, noiselessly, and uninterrupted ; the silver waters of the Champlain were already greeting, from afar,

their longing eyes, when the Lynx leaped suddenly from his boat into the shallow water, followed by the Algonquin and the Beaver, all of whom sprang to the shore with their weapons, imploring the oarsmen, meanwhile, to quicken their speed. This sudden movement, which had carried terror into every heart, was occasioned by the discovery of the enemy, about half a mile behind, surmounting a small eminence, and running rapidly towards the travellers. The ladies, nearly swooning with fear, were still relieved to see that the three brave men stationed themselves on the shore until the barge had passed, and then followed the boats, thus covering their retreat as best they could.

The speed of the vessels was at once greatly accelerated, both because the leading one was relieved of a material portion of its weight, and because there was no longer need of precautions to avoid an ambuscade in front. The enemy were behind, and all that was to be done was to press unremittingly forward with the hope of reaching the lake, and attaining a safe offing before the pursuers gained a proximity which would allow them to make a fatal use of their weapons. The headlong velocity of the foe seemed, indeed, to manifest a consciousness of this prospect of escape, and that their only chance of overtaking the fugitives was the present rapidly receding opportunity. The count, with pallid lips, begged the ladies not to be alarmed, manifesting his own fears, meanwhile, by the most earnest and ill-judged commands to the faithful oarsmen to increase exertions, which seemed already like superhuman efforts of activity and strength.

The Iroquois warriors had vanished from view after overcoming the hill on which they had been discovered, and having not yet re-appeared, their remoteness could only be matter of conjecture. There was something awful in this uncertainty as to their position, and in the thought that their stunning war-whoop might burst upon the ears of the fugitives at any moment, and from any quarter. The tortuous course of the creek, indeed, gave the enemy a material

advantage of distance ; for they were able to ford the water at almost any point, and thus preserve a comparatively straight line of march. But the widening channel of the stream began to give token of the immediate vicinity of the long coveted lake ; and the boats, flying still more rapidly forward, seemed to partake of the fear which influenced their occupants, and to leap, with living impulse, across the wave.

The creek, near its mouth, divided around a small island which the canoes passed on the southern side, after which the leading one stopped to take in the Indians, while the so called barge pressed on and took the advance. In two minutes more both had emerged from the creek into the lake, simultaneously with the outbreaking of a prolonged yell from the foe, which seemed to be made up of all the horrid noises that ever woke the echoes of Pandemonium. All eyes were turned towards the forest, where, darting like shadows past the trees, the dusky warriors were seen, scarcely a hundred rods distant, on the margin of the creek. But the same moment revealed another sight, more alarming to the three brave men, who now virtually commanded the fugitive party, and who composed its principal strength ; a sight but for which they would have laughed at the idle rage of their enemy, and sent back shouts of defiance to the shore. A scream from the ladies, more vigilant than their companion, told that they also perceived the new danger, and the words, "the boats! the boats!" resounded suddenly on every side.

Three batteaux lay moored on the northern shore of the little island, affording the Iroquois the means of pursuit in the water, which the travellers could scarcely hope to elude : for the long war-boats were provided with triple sets of oars, and, when fully manned, could be impelled with nearly the speed of steam. It was evident now that the enemy had been on a hunting excursion, from which they had been diverted by the accidental discovery of the northern party ; that they belonged to some tribe dwelling about the southern borders of the Champlain, was also probable, whence they had come

up to the neighborhood of the Horicon, to avail themselves of its well-stocked forests of game.

A moment, nay but a very breath of hesitation marked the conduct of the Lynx, after which he ordered the oarsmen to row to the batteaux: one of the men, trembling with terror, flatly refused, but the word of mutiny was scarcely uttered, ere the gleaming knife of the Huron was at his breast. The awed soldier saw only death on either hand: imploring mercy, he quickly yielded, and with his comrade, bent to the oars with a desperate earnestness that showed the most excessive consternation. A dozen strokes brought the canoe alongside the enemy's vessels, when the Lynx and his two brave associates leaped, knife in hand, to the shore, and quickly severing the bark withes which fastened the two nearer boats, pushed them off the beach. They next darted to the third vessel with a similar intent, but it had been drawn so far upon the shore, as to defy their hasty efforts at removal. There was clearly no time to call the soldiers to their aid, for the yelping pack, incited to new fury by the sight, were making the woods ring with their rage, while "brake, bush, and brier," snapped and crackled in their pathway as they rushed impetuously onward. Seizing, therefore, the oars of the third vessel, and the bark bow-ropes of the two which they had loosened, the Indians bounded back to their canoe, and bade the oarsmen pull for their lives. The ropes of the captive boats were intrusted to the Algonquin, while the Lynx and the Beaver seized their rifles and sat ready to fire at the first exposure of a foe; the barge having, meanwhile, attained a place of present safety, beyond the reach of musket-shot from the land.

The necessity of towing the batteaux, of course greatly impeded the canoe, and it was yet within thirty rods of the shore, when the enemy arrived breathless on the beach, and flew severally to cover behind the outermost trees. Well was it that they were breathless, and that their excited nerves and trembling tendons prevented a close or steady aim, for their guns were at once protruding from a

dozen points, and a volley of balls came hissing towards the seemingly doomed party, whose utmost efforts had yet left them within the dangerous vicinity. Foreseeing the coming storm, they had stooped to the gunwale for shelter, but the hurtling missiles fell like hail in their midst, wounding both the Algonquin and one of the soldiers, and opening some dangerous seams in their little bark.

Shouting back defiance, the Lynx and Beaver leaped severally into a batteau, and throwing themselves prostrate within, presented their weapons towards the enemy, waiting for the moment when the latter should expose themselves to view, by an attempt to reload. The threat forced the cowardly assailants to seek a deeper cover until they had re-charged their guns, with which, as it now became evident, they were not all equipped—a third, at least, of the party, having only knives and hatchets, harmless, of course, at such a distance. This division of the band, however, performed extra duty in swelling the immelodious concert which rang through the forest arches at intervals of a few seconds, and which came back in wailing echoes from the far distant shores. The wound of the oarsman was slight, and though eliciting many moans, did not disable him or induce him to relinquish his task, while that of the Algonquin, though more serious, was only proclaimed by the trickling current which ran down his naked arm, adding another hue to its diversified colors.

The boats continued to recede, and before the foe were prepared to fire a second round, full twenty rods were added to the distance between the parties; the vigilant Lynx gave timely warning of the renewed danger: every man was again prostrate, and the only injury effected was that of boring a few holes in the batteaux, and making a considerable rent in one of the leggins of the Beaver, a casualty at which that brave warrior seemed singularly disconcerted, and which he took evident pains to conceal.

The immediate peril was now considered past; another minute placed the retreating boat beyond the reach of probable harm from the shore: the leaks in the canoe were stopped, and, although another

volley was fired, the balls skipped with spent strength, idly along the water. The canoe in a few minutes rejoined the barge, which was awaiting its approach about a mile from the land, and the inmates of which had watched with harrowing anxiety the recent perilous adventure. Miss Montaigne eagerly inquired if any of the brave men were killed or mortally wounded, for it had seemed impossible that all should escape, and when informed that no serious harm was done, she manifested the utmost delight. Impatient of the count's faint commendation of his comrades, she assured the gratified Lynx that his brilliant exploit should be faithfully reported to the Baron Montaigne, and expressing her earnest thanks also to the Algonquin, she requested them to make her language known to the heroic stranger who had so efficiently aided them, and whose invaluable services to the whole party on the preceding day should not, she said, be overlooked. The Lynx uttered a few sentences in an Indian dialect to the Beaver, who answered it by smiling and looking a moment at Blanche with eyes that seemed eloquent of gratitude.

These, however, were the hasty occurrences of the first moment of meeting, for the peril was still far too imminent to admit of wasting time in inaction. No doubt was entertained that the enemy would be in pursuit as soon as they could construct new oars for their remaining batteau, a labor which would not detain them at the farthest, beyond two hours, and as they could throw a dozen men into this boat, who could relieve each other, by turns, in rowing, their lost time would speedily be retrieved. A hasty consultation of the fugitives resulted, therefore, in the resolution to destroy all their boats, excepting one of the prizes, which, when their party was consolidated, would be fully manned, and would offer the most probable means of successful flight. The necessary changes were speedily made, and the three vessels, including the decorated barge, having been shattered and rendered useless by the active tomahawks of the Indians, were left drifting in fragments on the wave, while the long batteau impelled by six strong oarsmen leaped forward with a most

encouraging velocity. For many hours everything promised success; the day wore on until the sun had attained half its meridian altitude, and yet not the faintest trace of pursuit could be perceived.

The relieved travellers were beginning to congratulate themselves on being entirely rid of their adversaries, when a small spot made its appearance on the southern horizon of sky and water, which grew gradually in size, and soon took shape as the dreaded batteau. The enemy was again on the track, blood-hound like, untiring, unyielding, prepared for the deathly combat, prepared to hunt their expected prey with vindictive ferocity, by night and by day, through the long wilderness of water which yet lay extended between them and their coveted home; prepared to send their frequent war-cry over lake and land, until the peopled forests should send forth their roving bands to assist in securing the common foe.

The prospect of the fugitives, indeed, grew suddenly dark, they evidently could not long maintain their advance of a vessel, the oarsmen of which, by frequent changes, were continually fresh at their work, and which had already given such ample proof of its superior speed. If they could keep out of reach of the enemy's guns until evening, their escape might possibly be effected, but the night was yet eight hours distant, and the batteau was coming down like the wind, in their path. Frequent consultations between the Lynx and the Algonquin manifested their uneasiness, and communicated additional alarm to their companions, and the ladies, disheartened by the oft-recurring danger, scarcely disguised their growing despondency.

The Beaver alone seemed entirely at ease, and labored silently at his oar, without appearing to partake of the excitement which prevailed around him. His post was at one of the aft oars, and nearest to the count and the ladies. Blanche, indeed, was directly in front of him, and sought, from time to time, to gain courage by a perusal of his composed features, which, whether they betokened stoicism or hope, seemed gradually to impart a portion of their equanimity to her mind.

By mid-day the enemy had approached to within a mile of the chase, and the imminence of the danger could no longer be disguised. The disparity in the numbers of the two parties would not of itself have been sufficient to cause the brave defenders of Miss Montaigne to seek to avoid the engagement, but the personal peril to which a contest must expose Blanche and her cousin, and the great danger of drawing other foes upon them by the tumult of a fight, impelled them to practise "the better part of valor" while it was possible so to do. Carlton scarcely assumed longer to control the actions of the party; the Lynx's suggestions, which usually included the concurring opinions of the Algonquin and the Beaver, met with a complaisant acquiescence at his hands, although accompanied by some feeble manifestations of a conceit which fear had not fully paralyzed. Anxious now, however, to anticipate what he thought must be the inevitable decision of his dusky council, and thus be able to claim one important movement as his own, he said, after a long, earnest look at the foe,—

"I think we must soon take to the shore, and fight them from a cover; here they can choose their own distance, and have every advantage of us. What says the Lynx?"

The Huron differed from his superior. "If we land, they will land," he said; "they are twelve,—we are three; these," he continued, pointing to the soldiers, "would be children at a bush-fight; here they are brave men."

The Algonquin, who was next appealed to, seemed undecided; he only answered, "Wait and see;" while the Beaver, whose opinion was asked by the Lynx, at Carlton's request, replied promptly to his querist, in an Indian tongue, but in many more sentences than seemed necessary to convey the few ideas which the Huron gave as the substance of his sentiments.

"He says, 'fear nothing, and go on!'" said the Lynx.

Thus overruled, the count, whose anxiety for safety overcame all other considerations, quietly acceded to the voice of the majority.

The confident air of the strange hunter continued to attract attention, and Blanche still found herself frequently gazing at his calm countenance, to glean from it the signs of hope which she could not elsewhere discern. When the pursuers had approached within about two thirds of a mile, he relinquished his oar and again muttered a few words to the Lynx.

“What says he?” eagerly asked the count, who had begun to regard the stranger with singular awe and deference.

“He says, ‘let the men rest; let the boat stand still,’” replied the Huron, ceasing his labors as he spoke; the other oarsmen followed his example, and the batteau stopped, while Carlton, lost in wonder, made no reply.

The Beaver looked for some moments at the approaching vessel without comment; its occupants had raised a shout as they saw the pause of their enemy, who, they doubtless supposed, had stopped from exhaustion, and towards whom they now rushed with increasing velocity. Scarcely half a mile soon separated them from the fugitives, and anon this distance was reduced to little more than a third; yet still the Indian gazed calmly and unmoved.

“For Heaven’s sake, do not let us wait longer,” exclaimed Emily; “I shall die of terror, if we stay here.”

The Beaver raised his gun as she spoke, and after taking a careful aim for a few seconds, lowered it, as if in doubt.

“It is folly to fire yet!” exclaimed the count, who was used to the imperfect weapons of that age; “it is but a waste of lead.”

The stranger, unheeding, again drew up his piece, and this time his eye lighted with a vivid glow, that seemed to proclaim success; he fired, and a quick, violent commotion in the enemy’s boat told the effect. The vigilant Lynx pronounced it most assuredly fatal; he had even seen the victim bound upwards and fall, and then remain prostrate and struggling. The enemy sent back a yell of wrath, and rushed forward with new impetus to bring the fugitives within the more limited range of their own weapons. A few minutes would

have sufficed for this purpose, if the latter had remained stationary ; and probably, at their now furious rate of progress, a quarter of an hour would have effected it, despite the utmost efforts of their adversaries. But no sooner had the Beaver discharged his piece than he bade the Lynx proceed with haste ; and, while the now refreshed oarsmen resumed their task, he quickly reloaded his gun. Again, at his bidding, they stopped, and again the fatal weapon poured forth its fearful missile, bringing back the very death-screech of its victim to their ears.

“ *Keep them there !* ” said the marksman to his friend ; and again the boat rushed onwards, while the undaunted Iroquois, yelling with insane rage, discharged a useless volley and continued their mad career.

Unwilling to increase their danger by adding to the necessary noise of the contest, the Lynx and Algonquin refrained with difficulty from sending forth derisive and defiant shouts to their antagonists ; but they chanted their low taunts to their moving oars, and sang, in improvised verse, the praises of the mountain hunter and his enchanted gun. The count, too, was lavish, for once, of commendation of their gallant champion, on whom every eye rested with admiration, and whose words and gestures became a law to regulate their movements.

A third time did the stranger hold up his finger as a signal to stop the boat ; and as the long, slender tube was once more pointed portentously southward, the frightened Iroquois were seen to crouch on every side, several even leaping into the water, to escape the winged messenger of death. The effect of the shot could not be accurately ascertained, the foe having probably learned more discretion than to reveal their loss ; but as the ball did not strike the water, it was supposed to have found a human target. Another volley was instantly returned from the enemy, and, to the utter consternation of the fugitives, the Lynx bounded suddenly upwards and fell prostrate in the boat, while a prolonged shout of triumph arose

from the pursuers, making the very forest ring with its reverberating notes. A horror, intense and awful, fell upon the little party, who had supposed themselves as yet entirely beyond the reach of their antagonists' weapons, and who saw in this fearful event what seemed but the beginning of a tragedy which could end only with their lives. The count and several of the men sprang to the side of the Huron, and Blanche, utterly appalled at the sight, with difficulty refrained from swooning, when the trembling voice of Emily was heard at her side.

“Look at the Beaver,” she said; “the cold, heartless wretch!”

Blanche's eyes turned to the stranger, who, heedless of his friend's misfortune, was reloading his rifle with the utmost composure,—and not only so, but his whole countenance was wreathed into a smile of merriment, that seemed an extraordinary illustration of savage stoicism. There was little, however, that was remarkable in the Indian's conduct; he had seen the spent balls of the enemy leaping like skipped stones across the water, and sinking into the lake at a furlong's distance, and he knew full well the feint of his ally, which, to the general delight of the party, was at the next moment proclaimed from the opposite end of the boat. The shrewd Huron, exulting inexpressibly in the presence of the extraordinary weapon and its wielder, which were doing such manifest execution, had feared nothing except that the enemy might turn back disheartened, before their numbers had been so effectually thinned as to prevent future danger from their pursuit, and, to give Indian nature its due, before either his revenge was appeased, or his love of martial glory sufficiently gratified. It was therefore only as a lure that he had practised this dissimulation, and he was now compelled to use the utmost caution in reasserting his existence, venturing to resume his erect position only when well shielded by his comrades from distant observation, and laughing, meanwhile, with much glee, at the success of his trick.

The commotion had not yet subsided, when the marksman once

more signified that he was in readiness; the boat was restored to perfect stillness, and every eye was fixed on the distant foe, to watch the effect of the shot. But the enemy had grown wary, and, following the example of the few who had before found safety in such a resort, they now leaped, like water-rats, over the edge of the batteau, leaving but a single man in the vessel. They had gone, however, in a mass, and the quick eye of the hunter was upon them, their gliding forms and the commoved wave forming together a wide mark, into the centre of which fell the hurtling lead. Two quivering arms up-thrown, clutching vainly at the void air, and then descending slowly, strugglingly, graspingly, to the surface, told the result. The survivors climbed quickly back to their posts, but consternation pervaded their ranks; no weapon was raised; no oar was moved; irresolution and indecision seemed to mark their conduct. Three of their number were slain, and the magical weapon which no ingenuity could elude, was again in course of preparation for its fearful work. No subsequent success could atone to them for such slaughter; for an Indian's victory is scarcely considered worthy of the name, unless achieved without loss, or with a damage vastly disproportionate to that of his foe. Their inaction, however, was but momentary; another futile discharge of their guns succeeded, and then their darting oars were suddenly put in motion; but it was no longer in pursuit. A retreat, inglorious and cowardly, was commenced, and severe, indeed, was the prudential self-denial which restrained the victors' shout of acclamation at the sight.

"Follow them! follow the Iroquois dogs!" exclaimed the Lynx, forgetting, in his excitement, that he was not in command.

"Follow them!" cried the Algonquin; "don't let them off so!" And the eager looks of the Beaver and the soldiers, as their eyes turned to the count, proclaimed a similar wish.

"Oh—ah—yes—certainly, follow them by all means!" exclaimed Carlton, in a tone of irresolution quite at variance with his words; "yes—decidedly; but don't go too near, boys!"

“ Ah, no, no ; let them go, if they will, in the name of mercy,” said Blanche, appealing to the count, and horror-stricken at the sight she had beheld ; “ let them go, for their sake and ours ; the blood of these fierce men is warmed by the strife, and they will surely bring more danger upon us.”

“ Yes, certainly,” said the count ; “ that is to say, we will see, you know, presently.”

A few words from the Lynx, however, satisfied Miss Montaigne that her forest friends were not acting unwisely ; the enemy, he said, would come back with the night, as silent as its shadows, unless now more fully chastised ; the charmed gun would then be no defence, and the foe might even succeed in finding allies to aid them ; nothing, indeed, was more certain than that their present flight was only preparatory to some safer attack.

The chase, indeed, was begun with zeal, and was kept up until the Beaver had thrice again discharged his weapon, although only once with any evident effect, the desperate efforts of the enemy having soon removed them beyond reach. The voyagers then resumed their way, congratulating themselves greatly on their present escape, yet not a little uneasy in anticipation of the future, for the retreating foe had not failed to fill the air with the most appalling cries, which seemed to threaten vengeance in some shape upon their conquerors.

CHAPTER XXIV.

“Up the rude crags, whose giant masses throw
Eternal shadows o'er the glen below ;
And by the fall, whose many-tinctured spray
Half in a mist of radiance veils its way,
He holds his venturous track.”

MRS. HEMANS.—*The Abencerrage.*

ONCE more must we briefly retrograde, to take up a dangling end of our narrative, and secure it to the main body of facts. It would be idle to seek to depict the emotions of the deserted Henrich, as from the bank of the Hudson, and on the edge of a limitless forest, he watched the rapidly receding boat of the perfidious count. When he recovered his equanimity, he remembered, as we suddenly recall by day some forgotten passage of a dream, the few words which had been addressed to him in the boat by the Algonquin Indian: “*Follow until we stop, and answer when you hear the corn-bird's call.*” They had made but slight impression on him at the time, and even now seemed little worthy of heed; he might possibly, by extraordinary exertions, keep for a few hours within view of the voyagers, but there could be no hope of being permitted to rejoin them; for although both the Indians seemed disposed to favor him, he well knew that neither of them would dare to openly oppose their leader. Every mile's remove from Albany also increased the difficulty and danger of retracing his route to that city; yet he did not for a moment hesitate to follow the advice of the savage. “Were the chance a thousand times less,” he said, “it shall not be lost through doubt or inaction of mine.”

He started courageously upon his journey, keeping near the shore, and for a short time was able to keep the count's boat within view. It was, however, only by the most exhausting efforts that he was enabled to do so, for his route led through a dense and pathless wood, where the uneven ground, the thick, tangled underbrush, and the low sweeping boughs, with their profuse foliage, were so many impediments to speed. His fatigue, indeed, became such, before he had proceeded a mile, as to render his undertaking nearly hopeless; for he felt certain that the count would not soon land, and if he kept even three hours afloat, his gain over the pedestrian would be far more than the latter could probably overcome during the halting of the party. In addition to these discouragements, another more formidable still, presented itself to his mind; he had been left upon the western shore, and Carlton now kept a little east of the centre of the river, apparently with the design to land upon that side of the stream, and thus prevent all possibility of being overtaken by his injured rival.

Disheartened by the seeming inutility of his efforts, which he still resolved not to intermit, Henrich had paused for a moment's repose when he heard with much alarm, the distinct sound of approaching oars. As he retreated hastily into the forest to avoid this new danger, his chafed spirit grew desperate under the thronging disasters which beset him; for he seemed to be ascending the very stairway of grief, where each successive trouble proved but the stepping stone to another, higher and more insurmountable. But words cannot portray his utter astonishment and delight, when, on attaining a safe post of observation, he discovered, approaching from the south, Harry's canoe, with its sable owner, apparently well nigh exhausted, yet tugging lustily at the oars, and diligently scanning the western shore, as if in search of some lost object. Bounding to the beach, Henrich shouted and beckoned to the negro, who, seemingly no less surprised and pleased than himself, came hastily to the land.

“Why, Harry,” exclaimed Huntington, still scarcely crediting his eyes, “what, in the name of the seven wonders, has brought you here?”

“Golly, Massa!” said Harry, panting with fatigue, “I been looking for dat are Albany all de way, and can’t find um; I tink I must be e’enamóst dare now, any how!”

“Almost there! why, Harry, you are twenty good miles past it—but you have made a most fortunate mistake for me, if you are willing to continue your journey a few hours longer.”

“Sartain, I will!” replied the negro, looking back with a puzzled air over the route he had traversed; “but it’s mighty strange! I ’member taking leetle nap while I was rowin’, and dat must been de time when dat Albany slip past me. I ’member now—but it’s mighty strange, dat is, gosh!”

Henrich jumped into the canoe, and taking the oars, bade the wearied negro compose himself to rest as best he could, an injunction which the latter complied with by curling himself up in the aft part of the boat, with his head resting upon the gunwale, where he was soon giving audible evidence of the soundness of his slumbers. Huntington labored with the assiduity of hope and courage, keeping close to the western shore, and soon caught a glimpse of the count’s boat some miles in advance, and near the centre of the river. Maintaining a distance from it which barely kept it within the limits of exerted vision, but which would not be likely to betray himself, unsought, to view, he followed until the count landed, which, as has been seen, he did upon the eastern shore, at about ten o’clock in the morning. He then quickly crossed the river, and kept along the opposite shore until he arrived within less than a mile of the encampment, where he also stopped, and having concealed his canoe, ascended the bank with Harry. There he selected a hiding-place near the river, and waited, although with but little hope, for some signal from his friends.

An hour, magnified into two, by anxiety and suspense, passed with-

out the expected token, and the shadows of despair were fast settling around his heart, when the faint yet distinct caw of the crow reached his ears, descending, as it seemed, through the air from some far height, and sounding much too natural to admit of the belief that it was an imitated note. Henrich gazed in every direction to discover the tantalizing bird which was mocking his misery, and saw, perched on a leafless tree, on the opposite shore, what for a moment seemed the object of his search, but while he looked, the fowl spread its wide wings, and dropping lazily upon the buoyant air, sailed majestically off, revealing the proportions and movements of the grey forest eagle.

At the same moment, nearer, clearer, and more distinctly than before, came the welcome sound, and no longer doubting that his friends were at hand, he responded imperfectly to the signal, and approaching the quarter whence it seemed to proceed, had the unspeakable pleasure, in a few minutes, of grasping the hand of his faithful friend the Lynx. The words of the Indian were few and hasty, and his air was more authoritative than that which had formerly marked him; he wasted no time in condolence or denunciation, but briefly signifying that the Algonquin had informed him of everything which had taken place in the morning, inquired if Henrich still desired to go to Castle Montaigne.

“I do,” replied Huntington, “but how is it possible? and if not so, why has Anak imposed upon me this toilsome and perilous journey?”

“The Algonquin is wise,” answered the Lynx; “my brother shall see it; let us go, for everything is ready, and the time is short.”

“What is it that you will do?” asked Henrich, following as he spoke; “I know the count will never willingly retract—will you compel him to do so?”

“My brother!” replied the Huron, “I am a chief, and the Algonquin is a chief’s brother, and a great Brave—but we should both

hang from the corner of the castle walls if we should disobey our leader.”

“How is it then,” asked Henrich, with indignation, “that you, who are of right an independent prince, thus consent to be the slave of a foreign nobleman?”

“My brother is wrong,” said the Huron, “we are our own masters—the King of the Hurons has never made women of us: we do not wear petticoats.”

“You came, then, voluntarily upon this journey out of your love for the baron: you might have remained at home, and will be again free when you return, but having placed yourself for the time under the count’s orders, are fully bound by them—is it so?”

“It is right—the baron is a great Brave!”

The Huron seemed disposed to be no further communicative, but led the way in silence into the depths of the forest, and, at the distance of about sixty rods from the shore, entered a thicket, which nearly impenetrable at its edges, grew thinner as they advanced. Henrich followed unquestioning, until his guide stopped in a small open space, sheltered on all sides from observation, and here to his increasing surprise, he found the Algonquin, evidently awaiting their approach. Beside the latter, on the ground lay a small bundle, compactly tied, the envelope of which, as well as the strings which held it together, was of deer-skin: this he now quickly unrolled, revealing a flash of gaudy colors to the eye, which, at a second glance, took shape as a brodered and beaded kirtle, leggins, moccasins, and belt, with other articles of Indian apparel; shells containing several varieties of paint, were also among the contents of the pack, and as these were severally opened to view, Huntington no longer doubted the design of his companions.

“We will make an Indian of our brother,” said the Lynx, smiling—“what does he say? Will he be a Huron Brave?”

“Most certainly,” replied Henrich, with exultation, for he felt confident of the ability of his friends to effect an impenetrable

disguise, and saw at once how inappreciable might be its value to him—"but whose are these garments? and how is it that you procure them in this wilderness?"

The Lynx hastily explained that it was the apparel in which he himself had started from home, and that his present Mohawk dress, although prepared before setting out, had only been assumed on approaching the Iroquois territory. It was not the proper raiment of the Lynx, as a chief, but a sort of uniform common to the warriors of his tribe, and possessed no distinctive feature which could lead to its identification; yet to avoid all suspicion, and make assurance doubly sure, the savages, with ready tact, made a few striking alterations in the principal garments, by changing in some places the beads and painted feathers, and in others, removing them altogether.

The clothes were soon adjusted on their new wearer, whom they nearly fitted, and then the equally necessary, but more repulsive operation of painting the exposed parts of the body was commenced. This was, of course, something beyond the ordinary decoration of colors which the Indian uses, for here a groundwork was necessary to assimilate the general hue of the skin to that of the red man, after which the fancy tints were applied. The hair was shortened and being matted closely to the head, received its share of dark paint, and when all was done, the savages, satisfied with their work, pronounced the transformation complete, and assured Henrich that the most skilful eye even among their own people could not detect the deception. Overlooking nothing, they next repainted the stock of his gun, and bestowed upon it a liberal supply of dents and bruises to prevent any danger of detection from that source, while his discarded garments the Lynx carefully enveloped in the deer skin covering, and took charge of for their owner's future use.

Having completed these arrangements, the sagacious Huron again bade his friend follow him, and led the way still farther into the forest, while the Algonquin, fearing the count's displeasure for too

prolonged an absence, hastened back to the camp. The others proceeded eastward about forty rods to a hill, where the Indian, pointing over an intervening plain to another eminence about six miles distant in the northeast, said :

“ When my brother stands on that ridge, he will see the lake of the Holy Sacrament : it is far on the other side—but a strong man can walk to it before the sun will set—does my brother fear to go ? ”

“ I fear nothing,” replied Henrich.

The Indian turned, and pointing to the northwest, with a waving, sinuous motion of his hand, said : “ The river winds and twists like a serpent—it is a long way before we turn towards the lake, and we shall not see it until to-morrow’s sun is in the west ; when we come, we shall pass near the eastern shore : my brother must be somewhere on the hills : we shall see him—I have said.”

The point which the travellers had attained in their long journey was about twenty miles north of the forty-third parallel of latitude, being near the centre of a remarkable bend in the river, which, crooked to a charm, for the next thirty miles towards its source, presents upon the map somewhat the appearance of a curling whipcord, thrown casually upon the ground. The route of the voyagers led up the river about twenty miles to a creek which, linking several Liliputian lakes in its course, extends eastward a dozen miles or more to the Horicon, while Henrich’s pedestrian route, striking the lake at a considerable distance from its source, was less than a third of the space to be traversed by the boats. Having received his instructions and promised a careful compliance with them, Henrich parted from his companion and slowly retraced his steps towards the spot where he had left the negro and the canoe, deeply engrossed in the reflections to which his singular situation was calculated to give rise.

Harry, meanwhile, had waited impatiently on the lake shore for his return, and looking anxiously from time to time into the forest, was startled at length, by the strange and formidable figure which he saw approaching :

“Jingo!” he exclaimed, “who be dat?—dat aint de Lynch, nor de Gollyquin; blazes! who be he? he must be some Irrysquaw as dey call ’em and want-a my scallap, but he cant hab ’em,” and Harry deliberately brought his gun to bear upon the supposed enemy, still continuing his soliloquy as he tried to perfect his aim, which the intervening trees somewhat hindered, and waiting for a little nearer approach of the stranger: “he most a too fine looking fellow to shoot down like a bear—but he *must* come—he no see me, and de first ting he knows, he wont know notting—golly, old gun! you nebber did sich a job as dis ere afore—dis aint no turkey—now den, look sharp and you shall hab good cleanin’ up to-morrow.”

The negro, indeed, had grown nervous, with the prospect, for the first time in his life, of shedding human blood, and being certain that he was unseen, waited longer than was really necessary for the accomplishment of his object. He had killed a bird at thrice the distance, and a bounding deer still more remote, but Henrich, by one of those minute events, the consequences of which, so vastly disproportionate to their seeming cause, indicate the unseen agency of Providence, became aware at this instant of his danger. A misstep caused him to stumble, and on recovering himself and looking up, his eye fell upon Harry and his presented weapon, just in time to allow of his springing, Indian-like, behind a tree for safety. He at once understood the negro’s very natural mistake, and shouted to him from his shelter, without daring to look forth: “Harry! Harry! don’t fire—it’s I—Harry—I say, Harry!”

“No—no—you don’t Harry me, old fellow!” said the negro, stepping cautiously out on one side, with his gun still levelled, and trying to get a view of Huntington, who was compelled to retreat warily around the tree—“what a fool I was not to shoot when I hab sich a good chance—only let me git anudder once, and I show him!”

“Harry Bolt! Harry Bolt!” shouted Huntington, now fully alarmed, and presenting his own weapon towards his assailant—

“don't fire, for Heaven's sake—It's I, I tell you, Henrich Huntington : stand still, or I shall be obliged to shoot you—it's I, Harry!”

“Oh ! it's you, is it?” said Harry, comprehending, in his excitement, only the last words of the other, and retreating in his turn behind a tree, to avoid the expected shot—“ 'spose it *is* you—so is dis ere *me*—what den ? now you jes show your red pate round dat tree—dat's all—else you stay dare till Mass Henrich come back and den we hab you on bofe sides.”

“Harry, you fool ! you idiot ! you dolt ! Harry, I say !”

“Golly, but he must *know* me !” said Harry—“and den he talk good English too, for an Indian.”

“Don't you know your friend Henrich Huntington ?” asked the seeming savage, but without daring to expose the smallest part of his body.

“'Course I do,” answered the other, keeping equally close behind his cover, and still unsuspecting of the true state of the case—“he's coming pretty soon, so you better s'render !”

“He's here, I tell you again—I am Henrich myself !”

“You're a lying Injun !” replied the other, indignantly—“I know your tricks : Mass Henrich is a white gempleman, and you are a red and black sabbage !”

“But the Lynx has dressed me up, and painted me, Harry !” said Huntington, soothingly—“these are his clothes—see—put down your gun and I will put mine down, and then come and examine me.”

Harry peered cautiously from his tree, and seemed slightly staggered : “I believe you liar and tief,” he said—“but put-a-down your gun and I put-a-mine down : I aint afraid of you on a rough-and tumble fight, any how !”

Henrich placed his weapon on the ground and the negro did the same, and both advanced a step.

“Hahn't you got a knife, you scaramouch you ?” asked Harry, suspiciously.

"No, Harry," said Huntington, "but I have a pistol—shall I lay it down?"

"Sartain, put em down—oh you dybollical debbil—you bin kill-a Mass Henrich, and stole his pistol: I'll tear you into a tousen pieces."

"Now, Harry, listen!" said Henrich, laughing—"which do you think is the best to catch a bass with, a straight hook or a crooked one?"

This fortunate reference to the sport of a preceding day at once fully dispelled the negro's illusion: he darted quickly to his friend's side, exclaiming:

"Oh Massa Henrich, I know you now, and dat your voice, too, for sartain—oh Mass Henrich! oh jingo! blazes! golly! oh *gosh!* Mass Henrich, 'spose I *hab* shoot you!" and the nearly frantic negro danced around his friend, now seizing one arm, and now the other, and manifesting the utmost terror at the appalling thought. It was several minutes before the faithful fellow could recover his equanimity, and when his trepidation had subsided, his mind passed to the opposite mood of merriment at Henrich's strange appearance.

"Ah dat Lynch—dat Lynch! what a genus he be!" he said, feeling of kirtle, belt, and moccasins in turn, and chuckling with hysterical laughter—"and he smash-a your splennid gun, too, what send a ball most to Skamkatky—but nebber mind; it wont hurt it—oh dat Lynch—oh dat Lynch!"

But Huntington had no time to lose, and it was with much regret that he now prepared again to part with his faithful servitor, who begged earnestly to be allowed to accompany him, or at least to follow the route of the boats in his canoe. There were obvious reasons, however, why this request could not be complied with, and exacting a promise from Harry to make no such attempt, but to return at once to Albany, he again bade him farewell, and set out on his lonely journey through the forest. His route had been too distinctly pointed out by the sagacious Huron to admit of his

mistaking it, and he succeeded, with little difficulty, in attaining the shore of Lake George on the same evening, where he found a safe shelter, and, what his fatigue had fully earned, a night's refreshing rest.

On the morrow, he sought the highest land, in the immediate vicinity of the shore, and while maintaining an unremitting watch for enemies, he also kept a vigilant look-out towards the south for the expected voyagers. His success not only in rejoining them, but in detecting and assisting to defeat an ambuscade which had been laid for their destruction, has been already fully recorded.

CHAPTER XXV.

“Ye’ve trailed me through the forest ;
Ye’ve tracked me o’er the stream ;
And, struggling through the everglade,
Your bristling bayonets gleam.”

G. W. PATTEN.

It was about mid-day when Count Carlton’s engagement, if such it may be called, with the Iroquois, had terminated, and when the voyagers, relieved from apprehension of immediate danger, resumed their route with comparatively light hearts. To Miss Montaigne, however, returned none of that buoyancy of spirit which, despite privation and peril, had marked her conduct during the first few days of the journey. That repeated alarms and a still abiding uneasiness as to the future had in part produced her depression was doubtless true ; yet her unbidden thoughts were continually recurring to the singular conduct of Huntington, and were ferreting out remembrances of imagined wrongs, which had impelled one, usually so kind and just-judging, to an act that implied evident displeasure towards herself.

Ever self-censuring, she could dwell upon this subject only with pain, for she held in vivid remembrance all the weighty favors she had received from him, as well as his generous and unpresuming deportment, which ever indicated a fear of seeming to claim a requital at her hands. That she had wounded so noble a spirit, had driven him from her presence, had for ever closed the way to explanation, and to returning sympathy and friendship, seemed to her now

distressed heart a depth of ingratitude and unkindness, for which it would be vain to seek a parallel.

Beyond this limit, her thoughts took no definite shape; her sentiments towards Huntington may, perhaps, at times, have been imbued with a glow beyond the genial warmth of friendship; but if so, she knew it not. Love, indeed, is not infrequently an unrecognized inmate of the heart, overlooked, for a while, or mistaken, by its inexperienced entertainer, for some kindred emotion, and only discovered at length, too late to be dislodged. Blanche did not seek to trace her feelings to their source; and if ever for a moment she had regarded Henrich as a suitor, the thought had been repressed by the conviction that there was an unbridged gulf betwixt them, across which Hope might gaze, but could not pass.

The Lynx had not erred in believing that the Iroquois warriors were not effectually repulsed; they had vanished, indeed, from view, and so long did they continue invisible, that hopes were entertained of their having abandoned their costly enterprise; but they were again discovered, about the middle of the afternoon, scarcely two miles distant, skirting the western shore of the lake, and skulking beneath its shadows. They had retreated with a succession of wailing yells and screeches, which were supposed at the time to be less in lamentation for their loss than with a view to invoke aid from the neighboring forests; and their present pertinacious pursuit was attributed to the hope of finding such assistance. They were now, fortunately, silent, believing themselves undiscovered, and it was the policy of the fugitives to let them remain deceived, lest they should recommence their dangerous cries.

But not many minutes had elapsed when a noise issued from their midst, different in its character from any which they had heretofore made; it was a prolonged, shrill call, seeming to proceed from a single voice, and the batteau at the same moment shot out from the shadows into a place where it could be more distinctly seen. The objects which had occasioned this movement had at the same mo-

ment caught the attention of the Huron, who, with forced calmness, now pointed them out to his comrades, recalling all their abated terror, and adding tenfold to its intensity. Three long canoes, containing in the aggregate not less than thirty men, were doubling a distant promontory in the northwest, and approaching in a direction which would directly intersect the path of the count's party; they were yet several miles distant, and could not be seen with distinctness; but they were supposed to be a war party, returning from an expedition, and travelling to their home, somewhere on the eastern shore of the lake.

The most utter consternation prevailed among the travellers, and the course of the boat was instantaneously changed, by the Lynx, to the east, in the direction of a cluster of small islands, which lay about a mile and a half distant.

"We can only fly," he said, in answer to the eager inquiries of his leader, as to the extent of the danger; "if they have not seen us, we may possibly escape."

It was the first time that the Huron had spoken discouragingly, and the count trembled as he replied:

"Why do you say 'possibly?' the night is not far distant, and they are yet several miles from us; the danger cannot be great."

"It is great!" responded the Indian; "I have said! they are many—we are few—see!"

As he ceased speaking, he pointed towards the Iroquois batteau, which was now proceeding rapidly outward, seemingly with a view to overtake the fugitives, or at least, hound-like, to track them closely until the other vessels should come up. They repeated their calls, which, as far as could be judged, were ineffectual in attracting the attention of the strangers, and this seemed the only encouraging feature in the affair. But even this was of short duration; for, finding other means insufficient, the pursuers fired a salute of half a dozen guns, following it up by a prolonged war-cry, which at once produced an effect; the canoes stopped for a moment, and came to-

gether; and when they resumed their progress, it was clearly with increased speed and in a diverging direction from each other, as if to make sure of keeping the chase within view. So great, indeed, was their velocity, compared with that of the count, whose wearied oarsmen had toiled ever since the preceding evening, that it became almost doubtful whether the latter would be even able to attain the refuge of an island before their allied enemies would overtake them.

When the design of the strangers became fully apparent, an ominous silence prevailed for awhile in the retreating batteau, broken at length by the hysterical sobbings of Emily and the low mournful voice of Blanche in attempted encouragement. It was the intention of the Lynx to land on the smallest of the islets, hoping that possibly one might be found sufficiently minute to be capable of defence even by his little corps, until some opportunity of escape should offer. He was disappointed, however, on drawing near the group, to find none that was suitable for his purpose: the only one which seemed even temporarily defensible was situated near the centre of the cluster, and was separated on the south from a sister isle, by scarcely sixty rods of water. To this refuge, therefore, the retreating party fled, wearied and dispirited, while even its stoical warriors entertained but little hope beyond that of selling their lives dearly, and performing the journey to the spirit-land in company with a portion, at least, of their invaders.

The isle of which they had taken possession was much too large for their safety, being nearly a third of a mile in length, and about forty rods in width, and would involve the necessity of a division of their small force to protect its several parts. The batteau, indeed, containing the first detachment of the enemy, came rapidly up and took possession as had been anticipated of the nearest island on the south, while the course of the canoes indicated an intention of landing upon another, which lay considerably north of that occupied by the count's party. It was the longest if not the largest of the group, extending more than a mile north and south, and approaching to

within a little less than half that distance of the territory occupied by the besieged party. The strangers passed to the north of this large island, and came down on its eastern side, remaining unobserved until they had effected a landing near its southern border, and encamped in the woods.

Thus were the unhappy travellers surrounded as it were by enemies, who waited only for the approaching night to attack them from every quarter, and from whose vigilant *surveillance* there was no prospect of escape. The count, the Algonquin, and three of the soldiers took their station on the south coast, while the remainder of the force, three in number, were stationed at the opposite extremity of the land; the Lynx being invested with full power to act in his section of the little realm, as circumstances should require, without communicating with his principal. For the ladies a fitting place was selected about midway between the posts.

It was about the hour of four in the afternoon when these arrangements were completed, and there remained a brief interval of suspense to be passed before the dreadful crisis should arrive, the probable issue of which was too appalling to be contemplated. Miss Montaigne and Emily remained for a while in the shelter which had been provided for them, but finding the burden of their fears too heavy to bear alone, they strolled together towards the place where the Lynx and his two companions were on guard, and begged that they might be allowed to remain near their protectors. To this, of course, the Huron readily assented, and while Emily, exhausted, sought a seat at a little distance from her cousin, the latter remained standing near the Indian and his comrades.

“You are not accustomed easily to despair,” she said at length; “why is it that you think there is so little hope of escape? The shore is not far distant.”

“There are four boats ready to follow when we start,” replied the Lynx—“we are safer here.”

“But the night may favor us—we may fly unseen——”

“If the Manitou should hang his mantle on the moon, we may,” said the Huron, pointing to the orb of night, which, although faintly visible as yet, amid the day’s superior beams, was climbing a sky singularly clear and cloudless, save in the far north, where a high piled cloud, towering like ocean canvass, navigated the calm expanse alone, but answered, alas, to no mortal hail, and settled slowly towards the horizon.

Blanche remained motionless, her lips only moving, and her eyes fixed upon the firmament; a pause of some minutes succeeded, which was at length broken by the low voice of the Indian:

“The Lynx is sorry,” he said, looking mournfully at the young lady, and impressed seemingly with the idea that he was in some degree responsible for the pending calamity—“he is very sad—but men must not weep; he did what he could—he has acted like a chief; is it not so? what does the Dove-eye say?”

“You have done everything that a brave man could do,” replied Blanche emphatically—“surely you have no cause to reproach yourself.”

“*He* will never know it!” replied the Indian bitterly—“the King of the Hurons will say that the Lynx was not a Brave.”

“That will he not!” answered Blanche, “my father will never do you injustice; besides, there is one who will proclaim your worth to the world; thank Heaven that he is not here in this hour of peril!”

“*Thank Heaven that he is!*” exclaimed a low voice at her side; “to share every peril of Miss Montaigne—to shield her, if it is the will of Heaven—to die for her, if it is not!”

To the air, to the water, to the surrounding woods, did Blanche, bewildered and terrified, look for the speaker, as this familiar and heart-welcomed voice fell upon her ear; but not to the dark and motionless figure, which stood scarcely a dozen feet distant from her on the other side of the Huron chief. So entirely void of suspicion was she as to the individuality of the Beaver, as an Indian hunter, that she could quite as easily have suspected the Lynx as him, to be the

disguised Henrich. Seeing no one but the supposed Indian, for the Lynx, with ready tact, had stepped aside, withdrawing also the soldier, she doubted the faithfulness of her senses, and believed that her excited imagination had in some way misled her.

“Did any one speak to me, but now, in English?” she said, using that language; “or does my mind wander?”

As she spoke, the Beaver advanced a few steps, and stood before her; his calm eyes fixed upon her countenance, for the first time, with no downcast look to conceal their hue. “Miss Montaigne,” he said, “I am Henrich Huntington, happy, even in this hour of gloom, to convince you that I have been no recreant to my trust.”

Speechless with amazement, with alarm, with delight, Blanche listened to these words, while the flitting color went and came on her cheeks, like the shadows of flying clouds upon a summer landscape. Her breath was short and hurried—her parted lips moved without voice, and her whole frame shook with her irrepressible emotion.

“Is it, indeed, so?” she said, at length, faintly, and with ashen face, resting one trembling hand upon a tree for support, and frankly extending the other to her friend: “Is it you, Henrich? Oh, I am very glad to see you, and yet I cannot bid you welcome in this dreadful hour.”

Huntington seized the hand of Miss Montaigne, and ere he relinquished, pressed it lightly to his lips. “I ask no better welcome,” he said, as Blanche hastily, yet unrepovingly withdrew the imprisoned member from his grasp.

“This is no time for idle compliments,” she said, quickly; “tell me why this disguise? And yet I should not ask, since in it you have once, aye, twice already, saved our lives.”

“Enough for the present, Miss Montaigne, that it was necessary; without it I could not have been with you; keep my secret, and above all, from the count.”

“You have had injustice and suffering,” she replied, hastily.

"Oh, how much do we owe you! how much have we misjudged you! But tell me,—for hope never seems to desert you,—is our situation altogether desperate? Speak frankly to me; I can bear the worst and ought to hear it."

"I should do wrong not to confess to you, Miss Montaigne," he replied, "that the danger is very great. The Lynx, who is most familiar with Indian warfare, thinks, if the soldiers do their duty, we may take a quarter, or, perhaps, even a third of our enemies with us into the other world, and thus fall with glory, but scarcely hints of any other hope."

"How dreadful to indulge such revengeful wishes at such an hour!" exclaimed Blanche, tremulously. "And the Algonquin—what says he?"

"Mallory, who has come from the other company on an errand of inquiry, reports that he is reserved and taciturn, and chants to himself at intervals—the sign is bad!"

"Alas, yes! it is his death-song!" answered Miss Montaigne; "he himself told us of the custom."

"We have viewed the worst side of the picture," continued Henrich. "We should sin not to remember that there is a Power which saves alike 'by many or by few.' He can preserve us, we know; and if such is not His purpose, that purpose still is best."

"You speak nobly, Mr. Huntington, and as created man should ever speak of the dealings of The Infinite; we are in His hands, and in this solemn hour should confide fully in Him; yet it is difficult for weak human nature to view closely and calmly that mysterious change which awaits it; above all," she said, suddenly raising her voice, with emotion, "when it comes with such attendant horrors!"

"Do not quite despair!" replied Henrich, soothingly. "We may not look for miracles, and yet there may be means and agencies at work for us, of which we have no knowledge. I do not wish to excite unfounded hopes, but a thought has occurred to me,

which has in it a ray—a faint ray of light; we know that all of our first pursuers are savages, and from them we can hope nothing; but there may be—it is barely possible—some subordinate English officer in command of, or in company with the other division, who would have sufficient influence to save our lives, and cause us to be regarded as prisoners of war; at least, if we could communicate with him, and capitulate, before the onslaught commences, and before the savages become excited in battle.”

“Alas! how many remote contingencies are these! So faint a hope serves only more fully to reveal our despair—yet you may be right; do not let me discourage you from any effort.”

Henrich at once proceeded to counsel with the Lynx, while Blanche, being so permitted, went to inform her cousin of the presence of Huntington, in the disguise of the Beaver; tidings which aroused Emily from her stupor of fear and grief, and infused a new though indefinite hope into her spirit.

CHAPTER XXVI.

“—————Many a peril have I past,
Nor know I why this next appears the last ;
Yet so my heart forebodes.”—*Byron.*

THE Huron heard his friend's remarks in silence, but gave little confirmation to his views ; he had seen nothing to induce him to suppose there were any other than Indians among either of the attacking parties, and he had no belief, if there were, that any terms could be made which would compromise the savages' right to deal with their prisoners after their usual custom. For himself and the Algonquin, he knew, he said, there could be no hope, and they could hardly be expected to be parties to a capitulation which did not include them in its protection. They were willing to die ; the spirit-land of their fathers was open to them ; they would enter it gloriously ; they would fall like chiefs and great braves, and would never be taken prisoners, and roasted like cowards, at a stake.

Such was the substance of the Lynx's emphatic reply, and so wrapt was he in the thoughts he had uttered that it was some moments before Henrich could again attract his attention to his own remarks. When he had succeeded in doing so, he repelled, with indignation, any design on the part of himself or the ladies, to seek exclusively their own safety, assured the Indian that if any treaty was effected, it should be one which included the whole party in its provisions, and reminding him that it was the part of a great warrior never to remit his efforts for life, begged him to reflect whether he could

devise any means to open a negotiation with the enemy. No one, of course, would undertake the hazardous errand of bearing a flag to a savage foe, nor could the only boat of the prisoners be risked on such an embassy, and nothing remained but to attempt to send, by some means, a written message to the opposing camp.

The Huron, incapable of opposing his friend, however hopeless of the result, undertook to find some mode of locomotion for a talking paper, if Henrich would prepare one, and they set simultaneously about their tasks, thus combining the ingenuity of civilized and savage life, where either alone would have been insufficient to effect their purpose.

The pocket-book of Huntington furnished from its miscellaneous contents a scrap of paper, on which he wrote, in pencil, the following words :

“ We are travellers ; three of us are English citizens—the remainder are French and their allies. Will our lives be protected if we surrender ourselves prisoners ? We are well armed. To any officer or gentleman in command of the enemy.”

The Lynx, meanwhile, procured a piece of bark about eighteen inches in length, and six or eight inches wide, which he speedily fashioned, with his hunting knife, into the shape of a boat ; a miniature mast arose from its centre, slitted to receive the trimmed leaves which formed its lower sails, while the letter itself, fastened securely above them, constituted a top-gallant-royal to the little vessel. A fixed rudder, the result of much careful calculation, was added, and the little messenger, freighted with many hopes, was set afloat, watched by the tearful eyes of Blanche and Emily, and awakening alternate hopes and fears, as it now slightly diverged from its expected route, and now pressed gallantly forward on its way.

The wind was blowing lightly from the south-west, and there was great danger that the boat might pass eastward of the island, notwithstanding the accurate adjustment of the tiller, to prevent such a result. Now plunging and dipping before some passing flaw, now

darting suddenly forward, and, anon, stopping trembling and veering, as if bewildered and uncertain of its course, it still soon attained a position about midway between the islands, without any material deviation from its route. Thence it proceeded with a steady and uniform progress towards the opposing shore, evidently attracting the attention of the enemy long before it reached the beach, one of whom was seen to dart out from his shelter, and seizing the toy, bear it back to the woods.

The excitement incident to this experiment had temporarily relieved the minds of those engaged in it from the oppressive sense of their danger, which now returned with overwhelming force. The effort which they had just made began to seem almost absurd, even in the eyes of its originator, and when five minutes of suspense had ensued,—minutes by the chronometer, but hours by the mental measurement of the prisoners,—a settled conviction fastened upon their minds that the season of hope was past.

“It was surely most cruel of uncle,” said Emily, first breaking the mournful silence which had for some minutes prevailed, “to expose us to such perils! Oh! why did he not rather leave us in New York until this dreadful war was ended?”

“Do not blame him, Emily,” replied Blanche, with a beseeching look; “he did not, indeed he did not, know the danger. The Lynx will tell you that for months there has been no hostile party in these parts; that the theatre of war was at other and remote points when he set out from home; and in proof of this, remember how very far we have come in safety.”

“Only to be murdered at the last!” sobbed Emily, bitterly; “oh, it was cruel—cruel—cruel! Think not that I cannot forgive him, but it is folly to seek to justify his acts.”

“Emily, dear cousin, do not talk thus; indeed he is not in fault; mine rather is the blame, and it is a fearful responsibility to feel at such a time! Ah! would that you had returned when I besought you to do so. Can you forgive me, Emily—Henrich?”

"Nay, we have nothing to forgive *you*, cousin Blanche," answered Emily, hastily; while Huntington replied to the question only with a look of gentle reproach.

"You will not admit it, I know," said Blanche, "and I thank you for your forbearance; but, alas! what avails now either censure or exculpation on such a point? We all did what we then believed right: let us think, rather, of more serious matters."

During this conversation, the Lynx remained standing on the margin of the water, looking upon that part of the distant island where the little boat had disappeared, with a singular steadiness of gaze, when it is remembered that he had expressed an entire want of confidence in the experiment. But his views had undergone somewhat of a change. Why was it, he mentally inquired, that the good Manitou had sent the little bark so unerringly on its course, unless to effect some good end? The slightest change in the force or direction of the breeze might have either sent it wide of its mark, or whelmed it in the turbulent waters, yet it had pressed gallantly forward, uninterrupted, to its intended goal. Besides this, there was something so incomprehensible to his untutored mind in the art of conveying ideas by writing, that he fully expected the talking paper would, in some way, succeed in making itself understood by those to whom it was sent, whether they were civilized or savage, and that a response of some kind would be made, either amicable or hostile.

About ten minutes elapsed while he thus gazed, when a quick ejaculation from his lips, and his upward-pointing arm, directed the attention of his companions to an arrow, shot with seeming defiance towards them from the enemy's camp. It rose to a considerable height, and describing a wide curve, fell into the water thirty rods from where the little party were standing, but scarcely had it struck the wave before the venturesome Huron had plunged into the lake, and was swimming rapidly towards it. That his quick eye had discerned something unusual in the missile was evident by his actions,

and his astonished companions watched breathlessly his progress ; no attempt was made to fire upon him by the enemy, and in a few minutes he returned to the shore bearing the weapon in his mouth. Henrich ran to meet him, and trembled with the intensity of his emotions as he discovered a slip of paper secured in the feathery haft ; eagerly seizing the desired, yet dreaded document, he read the following words, which were written in French :

“ I cannot read your message ; you must surrender, or I cannot answer for your lives ; we are thirty-five strong, French and Hurons.”

“ God of mercy !” exclaimed Blanche, “ they are our friends ! They are probably searching for us ! *My father has sent them !*” As she spoke, she glanced gratefully upwards, leaving in beautiful ambiguity the meaning of her closing sentence.

There was indeed every reason to believe that Miss Montaigne’s conjectures were correct, and so unbounded was the transport of delight which prevailed among the little party, that for a while they were incapable of taking the necessary means of ascertaining the certainty of their new and exciting hopes. But Henrich, at length, prepared another note in the French language, as follows :

“ If you are a French party, we are your friends ; this is Count Carlton’s command, and is the escort of Miss Montaigne. Attested by the *totum* of the Lynx, a Huron Chief, who is with us.”

Underneath these lines, the Lynx drew a rough sketch of his namesake of the forest, as also of a hand, extended in amity, and the paper was at once transmitted by the same mode of conveyance by which the other had arrived, for although the arrow must fall far short of the opposing shore, attention would now be fixed upon it and it could readily be procured by the other party. A boat indeed was sent out without hesitation, almost before the weapon had touched the water, no fear seeming to be evinced by its occupant of any evil during the implied armistice that was now existing.

No sooner had this new document reached the northern camp

than its effect became visible in the most extraordinary commotion: the whole party rushed to the beach, uttering prolonged shouts, flinging up their arms and running rapidly about. In a few minutes the boats were got out, and the whole company embarked and set out for the smaller island, while Blanche and Emily, divested of their last fear, scarcely refrained from fainting with the excess of their delight. Mutual congratulations were exchanged, and the Lynx was about to despatch a messenger to bear the joyous tidings to the count, when the latter was seen rapidly approaching in the distance. The shouts had reached his ears and leaving his companions to guard the southern post he hastened across the island, half dead with affright, and anxious to learn the extent of the new calamity. As he came near the northern shore, he caught sight of the approaching batteaux, which were now midway between the islands, and the crowded occupants of which were still making the air ring with their vociferous cries. He rushed up to the Lynx and Beaver, who, as they were standing as usual, gun in hand, he supposed were preparing to fire upon their invaders, and exclaimed to the former:

“Ah! this is horrible! thrice horrible! but do not fire; it will only exasperate them—they are too many; perhaps they will be merciful.”

“They are our friends!” replied the Huron.

“Yes—yes—tell them we are their friends,” replied Carlton, whose terror prevented him from comprehending the imperfect French of the Indian—“yes, yes, tell them we are harmless travellers with ladies, and that we do not want to hurt them—nor—nor—to have them hurt us, will you?” he added eagerly.

“They are our friends!” repeated the Lynx, quietly.

“Ah *misericorde!*” exclaimed the count, still unheeding the words of the other—“ah ladies, this will be sad for you, too; you had better hide—it is very dreadful: ah, how fast they come—how fast they come: don’t forget to tell them we are their friends, and that we can ransom ourselves with a whole boat-load of money—and they

shall have my watch, too, and—and—all that I have about me: don't you think you had better begin to speak—see how near they are—”

“They are——”

“Ah, I am sorry we killed those poor fellows this morning: that will make them very fierce I fear—but it was the Beaver, yes, aha! it was the Beaver did it—tell them so, you know, and if they must kill somebody, they had better kill him, of course, for these Indians are more used to such things.”

So rapid and earnest had been the count's language that it would have been difficult for any one to check its impetuous course: the calm, dignified Indian, too courteous to interrupt, would have waited for the torrent of words to flow by, before replying, if it had lasted an hour.

“These are our friends,” he now said, once more, scarcely concealing his contempt—“see! they are our brothers! they have come to help us!”

“What? what?” exclaimed Carlton, “our friends? Is it true, my dear friend? Is it really true? Are we really, really safe?”

“I have said,” replied the Lynx, coldly.

“Ah, this is most delightful then!” he added, breathing freely, and advancing nearer to the ladies—“ah, ladies! do you hear? you are safe; these are the Lynx's friends; do not be alarmed: in a few minutes you will have the pleasure of seeing us exterminate those fiends on the other island: keep up good courage—you are quite safe, I assure you.”

The batteaux had now approached to within sixty yards of the shore, and the Lynx, advanced to the water's edge, was already conversing with some of their inmates; in another minute the whole party were on the beach, crowding around the Huron, and manifesting the most lively joy at meeting him.

Their leader was a French sergeant, named Grill, who at once advanced to Carlton, and modestly resigned his command into the

hands of his superior officer, expressing, at the same time, his great pleasure at having discovered his mistake in time to prevent serious consequences. The Baron Montaigne, he said, had become uneasy at the prolonged absence of the party, and had despatched him with instructions to proceed as far as the head of the upper lake, if necessary, in search of them. Their own safety, he said, required that they should destroy or capture any small parties of the enemy whom they might encounter, lest intelligence of their expedition should get abroad, and their return be intercepted. This was the reason of their having pursued the count in a hostile manner, being prevented from once suspecting his true character by his change of the canoes in which he had left home for batteaux, and by his quick flight.

"But how is it," he added, "that your number is so largely increased? Your boats seemed to contain eight or ten each!"

"Is it possible that you do not yet understand?" replied the count, earnestly—"I have but one boat: the others are Iroquois; they were in pursuit of us when you came in sight: they mistook you, as we did, for their friends, fired a salute to attract your notice, and are even now on an adjoining island, kept at bay by a few of our men!"

"What a tissue of blunders is this!" replied the sergeant: "I mistook the firing for a warning from one of your boats to the other to give notice of our approach: we had not seen you until then, when you both seemed to fly in the same direction and we pursued; but we will have *them* at any rate, that is to say," he added in a less animated tone, "I must beg pardon for forgetting that I am no longer in command."

"Oh, take them! yes, take them, of course," said the count—"that is just what I was saying to the ladies—surround them—cut them down—show no quarter!"

"Do I understand that your honor allows me to command an expedition against them with my own men?" inquired Grill, eagerly, and fearful he was in error: "we can do it up in a few minutes, sir,

and your men must all be fatigued with duty ; we are all fresh, quite fresh, I assure you, sir."

"Yes—certainly—of course," answered Carlton ; "I give you the command ; we *are* a little fatigued, all of us."

"The Lynx is not tired," said that personage, who had approached during the colloquy, and stood listening to it.

"Very well, you may go if you choose," said Carlton, taking snuff, and seeming a little disconcerted.

"And the Beaver?" added the Huron, answering an animated look from his friend, who, since the count's return, had again been struck dumb.

"We cannot spare all our guard," interposed Blanche—"let the Beaver and the soldiers remain with us, I pray ; there certainly are enough without them."

"Enough, enough, certainly, too many if the count pleases," said the sergeant.

"Very well," answered Carlton—"let the Beaver and the soldiers remain ; go now, and see that you give us a good account of them."

"Let me implore," said Blanche, addressing the count—"that there be no useless waste of life : they are human beings, and let us remember what were our feelings a few minutes since in view of such destruction as now threatens them. We have received mercy, let us impart it. It is the law of civilized warfare, the world over, to spare the foe who surrenders ; instruct the men, I beseech you, Count Carlton, not to kill the prisoners."

Carlton informed the sergeant that he might consider Miss Montaigne's request as an order, and directed him to communicate it to his men, whereupon the party hastened at once to their boats, and set out on their errand ; a messenger having been first despatched to the Algonquin to inform him of the changed state of affairs, and to request him to co-operate with the attack in any way that his position would permit.

But a short time elapsed before the sound of guns was heard in a

southerly direction, followed by shouts and the varied cries that attend an Indian battle, and in less than an hour the canoes returned accompanied by the captured batteau, with seven of the Iroquois as prisoners. Three only had been killed, and the victory had been achieved without the loss of a man to the Hurons, although a few of both parties had been wounded.

The captives were guarded on both sides by the attendant canoes, and their hands were also bound together at the wrist, yet their leader, a large powerful man, succeeded in drawing his arms apart as they drew near the island, and, determined to make an effort for the life which he supposed forfeited, he plunged suddenly into the water, and sank, like lead, beneath the boats. Twenty guns were instantly presented to await his approach to the surface, and every eye was scanning the water to watch the place of his reappearance; more than a minute elapsed, when the shout, "there he is!" was heard, and a head was seen thirty rods distant towards the eastern shore, partly protruding above the wave. An irregular discharge succeeded, but with the first report of a gun the Indian again disappeared, and the volley proved harmless. Exhaustion, however, evidently forbade his continuance beneath the water, and he almost immediately rose a second time, when the Lynx, mindful of the Beaver's accurate aim, called to him to fire at the fugitive.

"No—no—no—for mercy's sake, let the poor fellow go—it is too horrible!" exclaimed Blanche, who with Henrich and the count, stood watching the scene from the beach.

"Fire!" shouted Carlton, gesticulating to the disguised Henrich—"fire—I command you; Miss Montaigne will have the goodness not to interfere: Fire!" he repeated, himself raising the Beaver's gun, and pointing with his finger to the swimmer.

Henrich, who could no longer affect to misunderstand his orders, glanced expressively at Blanche, and levelled his gun towards the Iroquois, making the prisoners tremble for their now seemingly doomed comrade, for too well they knew the fatal marksman and

his weapon, and they could not repress an exclamation of relief and exultation as the dreaded ball was seen to strike the water about three feet distant from their friend. Carlton looked angrily at the mute stranger, but a grateful smile from Blanche met his eye, convincing him that she comprehended his forbearance, which, indeed, had been no less in compliance with his own sympathies for the fugitive than with her wishes.

The confusion was now a little abated, and a boat was sent in pursuit, but as the swimmer, having fully recovered his breath, soon went down again and took care to change his direction while beneath the water, it was no easy matter to follow his course, and after several hair-breadth escapes from the shots of his pursuers, he finally succeeded in gaining the land, and making good his escape in the forest.

Carlton resumed his voyage on the same evening, rejoicing in the security which his increased numbers imparted, exulting in his victory over the Iroquois, and believing himself altogether a hero after Mars' own fashioning. Never did returning general enter the gates of world-ruling Rome, after desolating some distant nation, and adding a new province to the empire, with a loftier sense of his achievements than that with which the self-satisfied Gaul now embarked for Castle Montaigne. He resolved to lose no time by delay, and not again to jeopard the glory which he had acquired. Nightlong he travelled, and at meridian of the ensuing day the converging shores of the lake were seen closing around its northern extremity; the blue waters of the Sorelle gleamed in the distance, and soon the vessels were gliding upon its tranquil surface.

A few hours later the rejoicing voyagers beheld the rugged turrets of Castle Montaigne gleaming through the thinned forests, and saw a welcoming *cortége* thronging to the river's bank, to hail their approach. The woodlands rang with acclamations as the coming vessels were seen to contain the prominent objects of solicitude, the Baron's daughter and niece, the Lynx, the Algonquin, and the

Count ; even Montaigne himself, forced from his usual coldness, pressing forward into the very water to grasp the hand of his sobbing daughter, and imprint an unexpected kiss upon her cheek. In the background the timid Myrtle was seen peering with innocent and wondering face at the strangers, clinging with one hand to the dusky baroness, and seeming like a rose beside its root.

Carlton saw her, and trembled.

CHAPTER XXVII.

“Good sir, I do in friendship counsel you
To leave this place : albeit, you have deserved
High commendation, true applause, and love,
Yet such is now the duke's condition,
That he misconstrues all that you have done.”

—*Shak. As You Like It.*

If the Baron Montaigne was not a little delighted at the safe arrival of his daughter, he was scarcely less so with the reflection that her rescue had been achieved by the count, upon whom he now looked as her affianced husband. The exploit in a military point of view also gratified his vanity ; and renewing the remembrance of his own masterly escape, afforded him a double source of triumph.

“You have done most nobly, sir count,” he said, when on the same evening they conversed alone on the subject ; “you have snatched Blanche from the very paws of the British lion : you tell me there was an attempt to arrest her as a prisoner of state ?”

“Yes, sir,” replied Carlton, who had heard the story repeated : “yes, sir, on the very morning after my messenger, the Lynx, brought her out of the city ; I had warned him to lose no time ; I had told him of the danger ; I had instructed him to hasten back to the camp, and he came off with her in the night, sir ; yes, sir, the next morning would have been too late : yes, sir,—yes, out of the very paws of the lion—it is a very pretty thought.”

“They reached your camp, then, the same night, I presume,” remarked Montaigne.

“A—a—not precisely: we had started forward a little, finding our position not quite safe, and left word for them to follow: they overtook us.”

“Yes—yes——” said the baron, wonderingly.

“Yes—out of the paws of the Lion—very pretty, indeed—yes, that’s precisely where she was,” added Carlton, anxious to divert the dangerous attack of minute questions.

“They had discovered her name and rank, it seems; perhaps they had even heard of this affair of Seabury, which would, of course, exasperate them; but no matter: she is safe at home now, thanks to your vigilance and valor, my friend, and we may now snap our fingers at our Southern foes. The details of your report I will receive at some other time, when we are both less excited and more at leisure.”

So strong had been the baron’s prepossessions in favor of the count, created by his pleasing manners, and by the Marquis Vaudreuil’s representations, and so fully had this impression been confirmed by the success of the recent expedition, that it would have been no easy matter to change or shake his views. Nor was any such labor directly attempted. Rumors, indeed, were soon afloat, well calculated to wither the laurels of the hero, and to transfer the whole weight of his honors to other hands, leaving to him the inglorious substitute of ridicule and contempt; but they did not reach the ears of Montaigne, precisely because there was no one whose peculiar duty it was to bear them, or who was willing to communicate unwelcome tidings to a haughty and opinionated man. The general voice had, indeed, accorded the credit of once saving the party from destruction, and again from a most hazardous engagement with the Iroquois, to the mysterious hunter who had joined them on the way; and even Carlton was compelled to acquiesce in this statement, after some futile attempts to evade its force.

The Lynx and Algonquin tarried but briefly at the castle on the

day of their arrival, being prompted, both by their domestic and clannish feelings, to mingle first with their own people, and enjoy a breathing spell of repose, where they could recount their achievements, and exhibit the baron's munificent presents in proof of his approbation. They preferred to leave to Blanche the task of unmasking her pretended champion at such time and place as she should deem fit, little imagining how wide an interval separated the parent and child, unbridged by any familiar or confidential intercourse. Besides this, the extreme respect paid to rank in that age had secured to the count a strong party among the adherents of Montaigne, both civilized and savage, and the four soldiers who had formed part of his command were entirely subservient to him; so that, fixed already in the baron's prepossessions, and propped by such accessaries, he who attempted rashly to shake his position, might only succeed in jeoparding his own.

The disguised Henrich accompanied the Lynx to his quarters, being warned by his friend that it might be unsafe to expose himself at once to the wrath of the count, and the easily excited suspicions of Montaigne, during the plenitude of the former's power and influence. It would, at least, the Indian urged, be prudent to withdraw for a few days, until the sentiments of the baron could be sounded, and until Carlton had unwittingly accorded to Huntington, in his assumed character, that credit for his achievements which he would never concede to an acknowledged enemy. Henrich readily anticipated the character of the charges which would be likely to be adduced against him by a man to whom he had thrown defiance but a few days previous, and how apt a listener Montaigne would prove to any accusation involving the crimes of insubordination or mutiny against his own delegated authority. If these offences, exaggerated by a malignant ingenuity, should not be deemed sufficient to annul the debt of gratitude due to the chivalrous youth, there was yet another, in his conjectured aspiration for the hand of Miss Montaigne, which would more than cancel the whole remaining score of credit.

Blanche, indeed, understood Huntington's withdrawal from the precincts of the castle to be only for the purpose of a re-transformation to his proper semblance, and that he would on the ensuing day, at the farthest, return, accompanied by his Indian friends, to receive the meed of applause which was so justly his due, and to become her father's honored guest for whatever time he chose to continue his abode in New France. She knew nothing of his quarrel with Carlton, or of the great reason which he had to dread the count's resentment, and if she had at all suspected the views and apprehensions which actuated him in departing with the Lynx, a sense of justice would have impelled her to fly to her father, reveal the whole story, and secure, at least, his protection and hospitality for her friend.

It was an unhappy error growing out of a singularly complex state of influences and the want of opportunity for counsel or concert of action between the pretended Beaver and those who were cognisant of his real character. Had the latter at once declared the whole story of Henrich's heroism, and his wrongs, and promptly and unitedly denounced the count's injustice and cowardice, there would have been some reason to hope that the baron might prove a just and impartial listener; but delay and indecision weakened their cause, and proportionably strengthened that of their common adversary.

If other excuse is wanting for Blanche's remissness, it will be found in the sense of maidenly delicacy which forbade her manifesting too deep an interest in Henrich, and in the exciting emotions incident to an arrival at her new home, and a first interview with those near yet dreaded relatives who had so long occupied a prominent position in her thoughts.

The Baroness Montaigne was a woman of about forty years, of tall and comely figure, and with a countenance which only its olive hue would prevent an European taste from pronouncing handsome. Her features were nearly regular, and her face was entirely void of

that inelegant prominence of the cheek bones, so common to her race, while in her well shaped mouth, with its unimpaired treasures, in her black eyes and hair, and in her smooth broad forehead there was much to attract admiration. She was dressed neatly, in the fashion of the age, spoke the French language intelligibly, although with many inaccuracies, and but for a subdued and timid demeanor, would have manifested no little dignity of deportment.

Blanche was both astonished and relieved to find her so little repulsive in appearance: she addressed her with frankness and courtesy, expressed a sincere pleasure at meeting her, and was by her presented, in turn, to Myrtle, who, standing like a startled fawn at her side, seemed only to restrain herself by an effort from running away. If Miss Montaigne had been pleased before, she was now unspeakably delighted; Myrtle, whose striking charms, both of face and figure, have been described, was dressed in white, and wore a few simple ornaments, and her soft black eyes were moist with emotion, and her glossy raven hair, hanging in natural curls, trembled around her cheek and neck and shoulders, as she received in silence the sisterly kiss of Blanche.

What were the forest maiden's thoughts in that moment of agitation it would not be difficult to conjecture. She had never before seen a European lady, and she knew, as she gazed at her fair relative, that her own more sombre charms were in every way outshone. The entire novelty to her perceptions, of that variety of beauty which she now beheld, added to its value in her estimation; a white transparent skin, tinted with roseate rays which seemed rather to shine through than to dwell upon its surface; eyes of blue, eloquent with a thousand varying expressions; soft silken hair, which seemed to change its hue with the changing light, and yet was ever beautiful, these were strange and enchanting charms to Myrtle, who possessed an apt appreciation of elegance, and under other circumstances, would never have wearied of gazing upon them.

But they were associated now with mournful thoughts, for she had long looked forward to Blanche's coming with a sad presentiment that she was to prove her successful rival for the affections of one who however unworthy of regard, did not seem so to her. She had seen only the bright and dazzling side of Carlton's character, and, despite her already bitter experience, would not believe in its dark reverse. Was he faithless to her? She had erred in ever supposing that he regarded her other than as the playmate of a day—the little sister of his future brilliant bride. What madness indeed in her to compete with the magnificent Blanche, for the heart of a man of taste, talents, and fashion! Alas it was but a delusion, into which, in her simplicity and ignorance she had fallen, and from which, now only, she was fully though roughly awakened.

Such were Myrtle's thoughts, and little need be the wonder that it was with no light or buoyant spirits that she received the greetings of Miss Montaigne. But she entertained no unkindly feelings towards her: she had hoped, unconsciously, guilelessly, that Blanche might not prove to be endowed with extraordinary personal attractions, but this hope had vanished, and with it, for the time, almost every other. She knew that her father designed his elder daughter for the bride of Carlton, for she had listened with mournful heart to his own declarations of such a purpose, and had heard with forced calmness, and even with smiles, the often repeated details of his plans and expectations in regard to it.

Miss Montaigne, meanwhile, most fortunately for her own peace of mind suspected nothing of Myrtle's sentiments either towards the count or herself. She gazed upon the sweet sad face of her sister, and thought it was seclusion and solitude alone which had given her an air and habit of melancholy, for she did not reflect that when positive grief withholds its leaden load from the heart, there is an internal melody and beauty ever upspringing from its mysterious depths, imparting to all things their harmony and brightness. How deep and intricate a thing is that human heart! How little can the

eye discover upon its faithless dial—the face—of its inner workings, of those subtle and involved emotions, which, ever impervious to another's gaze, often defy even its own analyzation! Worlds of wearying misapprehensions, of groundless suspicions, and tangled errors of every kind lie hidden in its darkened vaults—but, thanks to Heaven! worlds, too, of generous and gentle affections, of unknown truth, and charity, and love, viewless to man, but plainly visible to Him who formed its labyrinthine halls.

Ignorance of Myrtle's sentiments was not the only immunity which Miss Montaigne unconsciously enjoyed, and of which she was soon to be deprived, for she was equally unaware of any serious design on the part of her father to bestow her own hand upon Carlton. Of the count's wishes in that respect she was not wholly unsuspecting, for he had found time, even amidst the excitement and perils of their voyage, to pay such marked addresses to his fair charge as scarcely admitted of misconstruction. These, however, she supposed, if sincere, would soon reach a point which would admit of their suppression, little imagining that they were to be supported by the full weight of parental sanction and authority, nay, that her whole change from her trans-Atlantic life to the western world had been made with a direct reference to this very event.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

“ ——— She is peevish, sullen, froward,
Proud, disobedient, stubborn, lacking duty ;
Neither regarding that she is my child,
Nor fearing me as if I were her father.”

—*Shak. Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

A FEW days sufficed to enlighten Blanche in regard to her situation ; for the baron was a man direct in all his movements, seeking no subterfuges, and who had been too long supreme in his little forest-realm to fear opposition to his designs. There were reasons, too, connected with his schemes for political advancement, which induced him, not only to desire an alliance with Carlton, but that it should take place immediately ; for it would connect him more intimately with the Marquis Vaudreuil, whose growing age and infirmities induced him to contemplate resigning his office as Viceroy of New France, and whose long and valuable services to his country almost entitled him to name a successor to his post. The count's direct influence at court, also, it was supposed, would not be inconsiderable, especially when he had returned to Paris with his fair bride, and with the reputation, magnified tenfold by rumor, of having rescued her from captivity, by a series of exploits unexcelled in the annals of chivalry.

“ You are thrice fortunate, my Blanche,” said the baron, when, a few days after the return of the party, he conversed with his daughter, alone ; “ you have not only triumphed over the English and the Iroquois, but if I can read signs aright, you have achieved still another

victory, scarcely less important : Count Carlton has not left you in ignorance, I presume, of an admiration which he has already freely expressed to me."

Blanche slightly colored as she replied : " The count, like most of his countrymen, deals much in compliments, and Emily and myself have, I believe, no reason to complain of not having received our share at his hands."

" I am much deceived if he is not prepared to offer you the highest compliment which a gentleman can pay to a lady," answered Montaigne ; " and must congratulate you on such a prospect ; I need not, of course, remind you that his proposals will do us great honor, and that you will be able, at your wish, to exchange this no doubt dreaded wilderness for the gaieties of Parisian life."

" I have no such ambition, I assure you, my father," replied Blanche, with a serious air ; " the wilderness has no terrors for me, nor Paris any temptations ; I have long been separated from you, and should be unfilial, indeed, to wish so soon again to leave you."

" That shall you not, if such is your desire, my child," responded the baron, with a gleam of kindness inspired by her remark, and by the elevated position in which he was already accustoming himself to view her ; " the Countess Carlton shall always find a home here while she desires it—yet I do not doubt you will at least gladly visit Paris for a wedding trip."

" You misunderstand me still," answered Blanche, with a sweet smile ; for as yet she knew nothing of the iron will of her parent, nor of the unbending strength of his resolution ; " it would be folly to refuse an offer before it is made, but if you are really cognizant of any such design of the count, I beg you will dissuade him from it ; it will save him some mortification, and me much embarrassment."

" What is it that you mean ?" exclaimed the baron, severely, and with vast astonishment,—“ but I perceive—I perceive—you wish to avoid a personal *eclaircissement* and to have it all arranged between

your lover and myself; you are right, after all; it is the more dignified way, and not unusual among people of rank."

"Why will you misunderstand me—father?" replied Blanche, hesitatingly, yet rising, and advancing a step nearer to him as she spoke; "I do not like Count Carlton: I have given him no encouragement, and wish to be spared from openly refusing him; I repeat I do not like him, and never shall."

Montaigne's countenance no longer expressed surprise, or anger, or any violent emotion; the cold serenity of command had settled upon his features, and for aught of feeling evinced, they might have been marble lips which now replied to the young lady:

"You are unfortunate," he said, "in not fancying a man, who within a fortnight at the farthest, will be your husband."

So saying, he withdrew, once more the stern and stately man whom Blanche had beheld at the hotel in Ostend, all the slight relentings of his gelid heart again congealed, and betokening that its winter was finally set in.

Miss Montaigne stood for a moment awed by the words and manner of the baron, and nearly bewildered by her conflicting emotions. She had hailed with ecstasy the first traits of seeming tenderness which he had exhibited towards her, had treasured the memory of his welcoming kiss on the day of her arrival, and had begun to look forward with fond hope to a full return of that affection, which she still entertained for him—the result of early instruction, and of habitually exercised duty, through the long years of her secluded life. This dream was suddenly dispelled; these hopes were dashed, and her own perhaps unnecessary rashness had checked this flowing stream of kindness. Pained chiefly by this reflection, she scarcely thought of the real danger which impended over her; for she still did not believe that her father was capable of a resort to coercion to obtain her assent to a marriage with the count, although she well knew the facilities for despotic power which he possessed.

But, as she reflected, her misgivings increased. Neither Hunting-

ton nor the Lynx had yet returned to the castle, and their delay, which had before been simply a matter of wonder, now created serious uneasiness. She feared that her father, of whose discernment she had the most exalted idea, had already penetrated Henrich's disguise, and even his sentiments towards herself; and that this discovery had been followed by the summary banishment of her friend from the country. If she dismissed these apprehensions, she yet reflected with sad forebodings on the probable reception Huntington would meet, upon his arrival, which might be hourly expected. How inopportune was the time for his coming! How surely would her father's suspicions be at once aroused and his ire excited! Herself laboring under his disfavor, she felt painfully conscious that any representations which she could make in Henrich's behalf would be comparatively ineffectual, and that even their Indian friends in lauding their young ally must proclaim their own insubordination, which alone had placed him in a condition to aid them, and thus materially lessen their influence with Montaigne. She even thought with shame that their delay in re-appearing at the castle might be occasioned by a pusillanimous fear of her father's censure for the clandestine act which had enabled Huntington, unknown to the count, to continue a member of his party; and in whatever light she viewed the subject, she saw the deepest cause for regret that there had been any delay in an explanation, the hazard of which, whatever it might have been at the time of their arrival, was now tenfold increased.

The baron, meanwhile, had passed from the presence of his daughter directly to that of Carlton, whom, with no circumlocution, he informed both of Blanche's sentiments, and of his own intentions to disregard them; inquiring at the same time if Carlton was conscious of any cause which could have produced so unexpected a result. The chagrined count was not backward in alleging a reason which, while it salved his wounded vanity, would, he well knew, strengthen the baron's resolution.

“Prepossessions, my lord baron, prepossessions are the trouble,” he said: “and I regret to say, for a very unworthy object. I had forbore, out of regard to your feelings, to mention to you, that a young man, who evidently had the presumption to consider himself a suitor of Miss Montaigne, accompanied her from New York to my—a—camp, and continued with us as far as Albany; even there, I with difficulty succeeded in dismissing him, after the most mutinous language and conduct towards me. I anticipate your question,” he continued, observing the signs of wrath which had gathered upon the baron’s brow; “but I did not punish him with death, in consideration of some services which he was said to have rendered the ladies and the Lynx in escaping from the city.”

“Perhaps you were right,” responded Montaigne; “and yet I could wish it had been otherwise. You amaze me beyond expression! Could my daughter have so far forgotten herself——?”

“Nay, I do not say that she had given him encouragement,” answered Carlton: “but she seemed fond of his society—conversed frequently with him, and probably fancied, since his departure, that she has an affection for him.”

Montaigne seemed much disturbed by this intelligence, into which he inquired with great minuteness, and afterwards, as his companion had expected, not only reiterated his resolution as to Blanche’s marriage with the count, but expressed a determination that the nuptials should be solemnized with very little delay.

“She is a minor,” he said, “and more immature in judgment than in years; I have the legal and moral right to dispose of her in marriage, and believe me, sir count, I shall exercise it without scruple or remorse.”

“Exactly so,” replied Carlton; “Indeed your parental responsibility for her welfare requires that you should enforce her compliance with what your riper wisdom approves; it—ah—really becomes a sort of moral obligation which you are not at liberty to evade, although it may be a little unpleasant.”

“Not a whit unpleasant, believe me, sir count,” responded Montaigne: “I have spent my life in overcoming obstacles, of one kind and another, and never feel more at ease than when one of these familiar phantoms is blockading my path; I glory in obstacles, sir, and since Blanche is disposed to rebel, I only regret that she has not a little more force of will, that the pleasure of subduing it might be the greater.”

“I fear ——”

“Fear nothing!” retorted the baron, emphatically; “go, and propose to her, but with no school-boy cant of sentiment; speak your admiration briefly and like a soldier, and tell her that you have my consent to pay your addresses to her. She is prepared for your proposition.”

CHAPTER XXIX.

—Now thy beauty is proposed my fee,
My proud heart sues, and prompts my tongue to speak.
Teach not thy lips such scorn.

Shaks. Richard III.

CARLTON lost no time in obtaining an interview with Miss Montaigne, still flattering himself that her objections to him were only feigned, or that they would readily yield to his assiduous addresses. He approached his subject with but little delay, yet with an unqualified conceit of manner, comporting but ludicrously with the idea of homage to his lady love. His habitual fear of compromising his personal dignity proved indeed a sort of check-string to the excesses of a native politeness, and produced an awkward *mélange* of ardor and reserve.

Blanche took the first opportunity which was offered by any decisive language of her lover to express to him politely her declension of his suit; but the count did himself the honor to hope that Miss Montaigne's views would undergo a change—"that—in short—she did not mean decidedly to—to—that is to say——"

"Decidedly, sir count!" replied Blanche, "it is best to be plain in the outset; I am obliged to you for your good opinion, but cannot reciprocate the sentiments you profess to feel."

"*Profess to feel!*" exclaimed the count, suddenly inspired with the hope that Miss Montaigne's coldness resulted only from uncertainty as to the genuineness of his attachment—"profess to feel! you doubt me, my angel! that is to say—Miss Montaigne; I feel all that I profess and a thousand times—that is—a considerable more."

“It is immaterial, Count Carlton,” Blanche replied: “I did not mean to question your sincerity——”

“But you will relent? you will——”

“Never, sir count, let me say it now, once for all—never—under any possible concurrence of circumstances of which the imagination can conceive.”

The count took snuff and wondered what degree of force of will the Baron Montaigne would desire his daughter to possess; he gazed at her a moment, and added with a changed manner which proclaimed a conscious security of position, and the cool insolence of his heart:

“You are animated, Miss Montaigne! I like to see it; it adds to your charms; you are a cherub, and will soon be a countess; the baron and myself indeed have long agreed upon a union of our—our houses; he has prepared me for these eccentricities; I do not take them amiss; farewell, Miss Montaigne: I shall have the pleasure soon of calling you by a different title—and then we will laugh at these little pleasantries.”

The suitor reported to the baron the result of his mission, and expressed his fears that the young lady's resolution could not be shaken.

“We will not make the attempt;—we can manage to dispense with her assent; she owes her being to me—to you its preservation; it were marvellous, indeed, if we had not the right to control her in a matter so essential to her welfare,” said the baron, seemingly arguing against some latent misgivings.

“Yes—certainly, it would be very singular indeed, that would!”

“She shall have but little time for reflection; promptness is ever one of the elements of success, and in a matter like this, may be highly essential; had she been less wilful the wedding should not have been hastened, but, as it is, a week from to-day, if you please, sir count, she shall be your bride.”

“Certainly, sir, you make me very happy, and I will do my best,

meanwhile, to overcome her objections ; if I should be unfortunate enough to fail, may I inquire how it is you propose to proceed ?”

“Inquire nothing, and doubt nothing, Count Carlton ; only discharge your own duty and believe me, that yonder chapel, which yesterday resounded with the *Te Deum* of the priests for your safe return, shall, at the set time, hear your nuptial benediction spoken. It would be strange, indeed,” he continued, after a pause, speaking rather in soliloquy, than as if addressing his companion ; “it would be strange, indeed, if among all the cowled priests who eat of my bread, there were none who could be depended on in an emergency. Our superannuated Father Parez is at least reliable, for he is well nigh blind, and the very brother of the adder in deafness ; he will go mechanically through any priestly function that may be designated, only place the parties before him, and signify to him whether it is a wedding, a christening, or a funeral, and it will be sung through, despite any interruption less than a cannonading.”

“Ah yes, Father Parez—I know his reverence—he mistook me this morning for the Lynx, and when I shouted my salutations in his ear, in the very best of French, he thanked me, and said he did not understand the Huron language—ha ! ha ! yes, he’s the very man.”

“And his marriage certificate will be equal to the pope’s,” added Montaigne—“therefore, I say again, fear nothing, for rather than be thwarted in this measure, I would bestow Blanche upon you after the custom of the nation, of which, as you are aware, I am now the principal chief. There is a thing, you must know, which cob-web spinning lawyers call the *lex loci contractu*—they put it into His Majesty’s gracious noddle, and made my Indian *cara sposa* a baroness ; the marquis has told you the story of course ; and as it is a law of which I have had the benefit,” the baron smiled bitterly at the word, “it is but fair that you should have it also, if needed.”

“You are a most potent monarch in your way, my lord baron,” replied Carlton, gleefully ; “Prospero in his haunted isle, was a pigmy to you ; I rely on you with perfect confidence.”

“You may do so, sir count, and believe me, that, a week from to-day, Blanche shall be your bride.”

The baron's excitement prevented him from observing that the door of his room had opened before he uttered the last sentence, and that the moccasined Lynx had entered with his usual noiseless tread.

“How is this?” he said sternly, “why do you intrude thus upon our privacy? But, I am wrong; he comes ever thus, like a shadow, and has never been reproved; if there is fault, therefore, it is mine.”

“Is not this my cousin, the King of the Hurons?” said the Indian gravely.

“It is—it is,” said the baron; “I was hasty, the Lynx is welcome; why has he not brought his valiant friend, the Beaver, with him; there are piled presents awaiting his return.”

“The Beaver shall come; my cousin shall see him,” replied the Indian, departing as he spoke, as silently as he had approached.

Encouraged by the manner in which Montaigne had spoken of the disguised Henrich, the Indian had concluded that it was a favorable moment to produce his friend, and to make the long deferred explanation. He had heard, but scarcely heeded the baron's promise to bestow Blanche on the count as his bride, for the intelligence was not new to his mind, rumor having long predicted the alliance, although no suspicion was entertained of its being in opposition to the lady's wishes. Sagacious as was the Lynx on other points, he was quite at fault in all the signs which mark affection between young hearts; the trail of Cupid was invisible to his eyes; and he had failed to discover the daring love of Henrich for the beautiful companion of his travels. If it had been otherwise, and above all, if he had suspected the baron's knowledge of such an attachment, his reason, soberer than the lover's, would have anticipated no friendly reception of Huntington by Montaigne, and he would have been spared the bitter disappointment to which he was destined.

— Bitter, indeed, it was, both for him and the ingenuous youth. Not

that Henrich had been unwise enough to anticipate a very cordial welcome, or insane enough to hope to supplant his titled rival in the regard of the baron; but he had expected common justice and gratitude, and hospitality, and for everything beyond, he was willing to wait the revealings of time and truth. He had begun to feel confident of an interest in the heart of Blanche, and although he knew that a thousand influences would be brought to bear upon her mind in favor of the count, he still hoped on, vaguely and indefinitely, as the desolate will ever hope.

As he approached the castle, clad once more in his proper apparel, the appalled count discerned him in the distance, and a sudden perception of the *ruse* which had been practised upon him, filled his heart with rage and mortification. He kept, however, warily aloof from the visiter, convinced that he had already planted a petard in his path to which his own steps must now ensure a destructive explosion. He did not greatly overrate the effect of the suspicions which he had excited in the baron's breast, and little more is perhaps essential to be related of the interview which ensued. The ghosts of past offences, and the phantoms of anticipated wrongs were conjured up to meet the guest, and where he thought to be treated as a benefactor, he found himself virtually arraigned as a criminal. His advantages of person and education served only to increase the disfavor with which he was beheld, for in these things, his host saw but the confirmation of Carlton's suspicions, and the probable cause of his daughter's mysterious conduct.

Henrich was, in short, barely forgiven as an offender, was insulted by the offer of a pecuniary reward for his services, and, if not denied the hospitalities of the castle, they were tendered in a way which rendered their rejection necessary to his self-respect. He departed, as he came, with the Lynx, more cold and stately than the man whose presence he left, and scathing, with the legible scorn of his face and air, a heart which scorn alone could scathe.

He did not see Blanche: she knew not of his presence, and heard

only at a subsequent hour an imperfect and unreliable account of what had taken place; and it was in vain that either herself or Emily sought to gain speech with the incensed baron on the subject. She learned, however, through Myrtle's agency, that Henrich had taken up his abode with the Lynx, and rejoicing in the security which the attachment of the faithful chief afforded him, she still indulged the hope that some returning sense of justice would yet actuate her father's conduct towards him. She did not, indeed, anticipate a change which could ever favor Henrich's claims as her suitor, but at the same time she remained comparatively free from any serious apprehensions of a compulsory union to another. The plot, however, was thickening around her, the mesh was entangling her steps, the more securely, because unsuspected.

CHAPTER XXX.

“Come, Friar Francis, be brief; only to the plain form of marriage, and you shall recount their particular duties afterward.—*Shaks. Much Ado about Nothing.*”

A WEEK, marked by no important events, ensued, during which, Huntington continued with his Huron friend, partaking, to some extent, both of his labors and his sports. The Indian, it will be remembered, had overheard the promise made by the baron to Carlton, that within a week Blanche should become his bride, but the subject, exciting little interest at the time, had been subsequently expelled from his mind by the engrossing emotions incident to Henrich's reception. It recurred to him, however, at length, on the very last of the limited days, and he was little prepared for the agitation which the casual announcement of the tidings to his guest occasioned. Incredulous of danger at first, doubt and alarm rapidly succeeded in Huntington's mind; he believed it indeed impossible that Blanche's consent could fairly have been obtained to so speedy a marriage, but he knew not to what influences she might have been subjected, while his knowledge of the baron's character taught him to dread the worst.

Filled with fear and anxiety, and feeling his utter impotence to stay the impending blow, (alas! might it not already have fallen?) he walked at dusk, towards the castle, hoping to glean some information, which might relieve his mind from its torturing apprehensions. He thought it a favorable sign, as he drew near the building, that it was not unusually lighted, and that there was not the least of that bustling commotion, which, to some extent, usually marks so

momentous an event even when it is comparatively private. He had gazed long and closely, and was about turning away, when his eye fell upon a solitary light gleaming through a window of the chapel, an edifice of considerable size, which stood without the walls, about sixty yards north of the castle, and like it, fronting towards the river. With the sight, the remembrance flashed upon his mind, that the baron belonged to a church, which regarded the marriage ceremony as a sacrament, to the validity of which, as consecrated hands were essential, a consecrated altar was scarcely less so. Was it not possible then, that at that very moment the mystic words were spoken, almost within his hearing, which would prove the knell of hope and joy to his heart ?

Resolved to know the worst, to behold, if he could, the dreaded rite, and to learn at least if there were not some tokens of sadness and reluctance on the part of Blanche, which might take from his anguish a portion of its intensity, he turned quickly and with resolute air towards the church. He approached the principal entrance, and finding it closed, passed around the building, to a small postern door through which the priests were accustomed to enter. This also was fastened, but scarcely had he relinquished the unyielding latch, when he heard the sound of coming footsteps, and at the next breath, he discovered, through the dim light, the bulky figure of Father Parez, clad in sacerdotal robes, approaching with a slow and heavy tread. Henrich stepped aside to make way for the priest, who, either unobservant of his presence, or mistaking him for some official of the chapel, passed him without remark, and applying a key to the door, opened it, and went in. Huntington followed, with no attempt at secrecy, yet unseen ; with no suppressed tread, yet unheard ; he entered the main body of the church, and remained standing near the centre of the principal aisle.

The clergyman, meanwhile, with no little rattling of his robes, approached the reading desk, and bending for a minute in the posture of devotion, rose and peered earnestly around him in search

of the wedding *cortége* which he did not seem to doubt were assembled somewhere near the chancel. Failing in his search, yet supposing them to be seated in some of the surrounding pews, he repeated the first few words of the marriage service, by way of an invocation to bring them forward; but the husky tones died away unanswered, and the priest, wisely concluding that the party had not yet arrived, seated himself to await their coming.

The stolidity of this conduct did not fail to excite Henrich's suspicions. Why, with quick thought, he asked himself, has this palsied man been selected to perform a rite like this? Why is he unattended by clerk or associate? Why this dimly lighted room, and these closely fastened doors? True, the appointed hour might not yet have arrived; the church might yet be more fittingly lighted, and its portals thrown open, but with such fearful conjectures as now forced themselves upon his mind, he resolved at least to seek a position which would not expose him to observation, and await the result.

He accordingly selected an obscure seat, into which the dim light did not penetrate, and from which, unobserved, he could plainly see all that occurred in the vicinity of the altar. Scarcely had he done so, when the sound of coming steps reached his ears, and startled his throbbing heart into increased and violent action, for, on the revelations of the next moment would depend, as he supposed, the question whether some reluctant consent to the ceremony had been wrung by threats and entreaty from Miss Montaigne, or whether she was sought to be made the victim of a still more perfidious plot. If Emily and Myrtle, or either of them, should accompany her, he must believe the former; if not, there could no longer be a doubt as to the nefarious design, and he resolved at least boldly to lift up his voice in protest against it. Yet alas! what could he do, beyond drawing the full weight of the despotic baron's wrath upon himself, producing his immediate banishment, and perhaps even his death, and that too without affording relief or rescue to the object of his solicitude.

Racked with agony by the impending crisis, which even his ever

elastic hope foresaw no means of averting, his eye rested upon the now opening door, where he beheld Carlton, richly dressed, entering noiselessly and alone. The count bowed low to the priest, who seemingly unobservant of the greeting, continued to rattle the leaves of his prayer book, and look vacantly around, while the former remained standing near the chancel, watching with a nervous and excited air, the door through which he had just passed. Five minutes elapsed, when it again slowly opened, a sob and voice of entreaty were heard without, and a stern reply, and the Baron Montaigne supporting his half-swooning daughter upon his arm, entered the chapel.

“Not here—not thus—my father,” she said; “if indeed it must be! give me at least time for thought and preparation, and let Emily and Myrtle stand at my side; I appeal to you, sir count! I came hither, as I supposed, to attend religious service, and it was only this moment at the door that I was undeceived: give me time—time—time to think,” she said, faintly, pressing her hand to her head, and looking around with a bewildered air.

An air of some incertitude marked the baron’s conduct: his attempt at a surreptitious marriage was, indeed, only an experiment, yet it was one which a knowledge of his daughter’s timidity induced him to believe would be perfectly successful; if it should prove otherwise, he had other schemes in reserve more certain to be effectual. Seemingly listening to her expostulations, he had contrived to station her directly in front of the priest, and while he replied, the count had stepped to her side, and Father Perez, being notified by a gesture to proceed, was already rapidly reciting the marriage service.

“It shall be repeated in the castle, if you desire, my child,” said the baron, speaking in a far louder tone than the clergyman’s, and endeavoring to distract her attention from what was taking place; “then they shall all be present, and there shall be a great *fête*—only be calm now—be calm—”

“Give me time—time,” she said, heedless that the priest was

rapidly running through the mystic ceremony, and that the count was responding and bowing assent to the demands of the ghostly father—"give me time!" she repeated, with a look of agony at her parent, who, under pretence of supporting her, was holding her by the arm, "If it is my duty, I will submit—but not now—oh not now—I will not—can not ——"

"SHALL NOT!" exclaimed Henrich, wrought to desperation by the fear that the fatal tie would be completed beyond relief—"SHALL NOT!" he said, springing, almost at a bound, to her side, and startling the group as if a thunderbolt had fallen in their midst—while still the nasal song of the priest went on, undisturbed even by the commotion around him. Carlton had sprung backward and stood transfixed with terror, gazing at the intruder; Blanche, released from her father's grasp, was clinging to the rail of the chancel, while the baron himself had receded a step, and stood looking with such amazement on Henrich, as that with which one might view a spirit evoked from the grave.

"SHALL NOT!" repeated Huntington, in tones that rang and vibrated through every corner of the darkened building, and which awoke the automaton priest, at length, to a consciousness that something was amiss, and caused him to suspend his chant, "not while I have voice to forbid, and strength to stay the unhallowed deed?"

"What madman is this?" exclaimed Montaigne, nearly voiceless with rage, and stepping towards Henrich as he spoke: "is it thou, most insolent, and audacious?"

"It is I!" replied Henrich—"a madman, if you will, yet driven to madness: listen, lord baron, one moment to me—for her sake—for yours—not for mine ——"

"In the dungeon I will listen to thee!" answered Montaigne, stepping towards the door: "see to your bride, sir count, while I summon some men from the garrison."

The baron disappeared as he spoke, and Carlton stood motionless, gazing at the door through which he had vanished.

“Fly—fly—Mr. Huntington, I implore you!” exclaimed Blanche, addressing him in English, “you do not know of what my father is capable—go, I beseech you; your very life may be in danger.”

“And you,—dear Blanche? —”

“You can do nothing for me—I am lost—but fly, and save your life—the Lynx can protect you.”

“And he can protect *you*, Miss Montaigne, or at least can conceal you until this danger is past, and your father relents—or—we may escape together—dearest Blanche—if—if you will be mine!”

“*It is impossible!* there is no hope. Go, I beseech you; I hear my father shouting to the men! oh, they will surely kill you! go, go, I beseech!”

“Never without you, Blanche! If you would save my life, fly with me! Oh, resist this tyranny; there is no law, human or divine, which requires you to submit to it. Will you go? there is not a moment to lose.”

Henrich seized the arm of the wavering girl as he spoke, and, while bewildered and undecided she yet stepped slowly forward, the count, with sudden suspicion of the movement, shouted, “Stop! stop, I command you!” and advanced hesitatingly towards her. This movement decided Blanche, and turned into a flight, what otherwise, perhaps, would not have become so; clinging to Henrich’s arm, she darted with him through the doorway by which they had entered the chapel, and as they passed it, Carlton, more courageous than usual, was close behind them; but Henrich, withdrawing Blanche’s arm for a moment from his own, turned quickly around, and thrusting his pursuer suddenly back into the building, closed the door, and locked it by means of the key which had remained in the outer side.

The voice of the returning baron and the tread of the approaching soldiers were already sounding in his ears, as, again supporting Blanche, he turned an angle of the church, and sought to escape towards the forest, the dense border of which was scarcely a hun-

dred yards distant ; but, alas, the heavily increasing burden on his arm told him that Miss Montaigne was incapable of flight, and in another moment he became sensible that she had swooned. To carry her, unobserved, across the interval which separated them from the woods was clearly impossible, and nearly hopeless of eluding observation, he yet drew her closely within the shade of the chapel, and with fast throbbing heart awaited the result.

A confused sound of rapid talking at the same moment was heard, the crash of a yielding door, and then the count's agitated voice, shouting, "They have fled! they have fled! get lights and follow, towards the forest; cut him down! cut him down!"

"*Silence!*" exclaimed the baron, in a voice hoarse with terrific rage; "say not my daughter has fled! The miscreant has carried her off, and he shall surely die for the act; but take him unharmed; there is a fitter death for him than the sword."

So saying he led the way towards the wilderness, and in a moment the whole tide of pursuit had passed by; yet scarcely had Montaigne gone a dozen rods, when, again stopping, he called aloud, "Back! back, half of you, to the river, and guard the boats; call out more men; he cannot escape us!"

This order, indeed, anticipated the design of Huntington, and seemed to cut off his last chance of retreat; the river was about thirty rods distant towards the west, and he had resolved to gain it, if possible, when Blanche revived, and by means of a canoe, set out northwardly for the St. Lawrence, and Montreal. In a few moments the returning soldiers again passed him scarcely twenty feet distant, eager and voluble as hounds on the chase, and sending one towards the barracks for a reinforcement, they dashed onward to the river.

The whole castle was now in commotion, while its precincts were alive with people, running in every direction, and inquiring the cause of the alarm; moving lights were flashing from a dozen windows; screams of affright were heard, and anon, booming loudly above the uproar, a cannon roared sullenly from the walls. The baron,

thoughtful of every precaution, had despatched back a messenger to give this signal to put his Indian allies on the alert, and to summon their leaders to his presence, for he well knew the extraordinary daring and sagacity of Huntington, and wisely conjectured that if he once attained an advantageous start, there might be the most serious difficulty in overtaking him.

It was in the midst of this tumult that Blanche at length awoke to a sense of her situation, and listened to the earnest importunities of Henrich to rally her strength and courage.

“This way, dear Blanche! to the river!” he said, pointing in a direction north of where the soldiers had gone—“if I can procure a boat, we may yet be safe.”

“Oh, no, no, Henrich! alone! in the wilderness! I cannot go; I am dying with terror; let us stay; let us return to my father; I will throw myself upon my knees, and never, never rise until he has forgiven you.”

“It is idle to talk thus, dearest Blanche!” replied Henrich, speaking with great rapidity: “he will not relent, nor will he release you from this hated marriage; I have learned the whole story—it is the darling project of his heart; it is connected with his political fortunes, and for this alone is it that you have been brought from your home in England. Renounce then, these scruples, and assert your liberty: the world is before us ——”

“Hist!” exclaimed a whispering voice at their side, and Myrtle, trembling like an aspen, stood before them: “the soldiers are coming this way,” she said: “you cannot escape; every point is guarded; but there are safe hiding-places in the castle, where you can remain until means of successful flight are found,—if we can but reach them: if you dare to try, follow me!”

She turned as she spoke, and darted close along the northern wall of the chapel, followed by Blanche and Henrich, and turning another angle, the party gained the front of the building, still keeping within its deep shadows. Scarcely sixty yards separated them from the

castle walls, but the intervening space was alive with moving figures, traversing it in every direction, and shouting unintelligibly to each other. If the faint starlight revealed no one distinctly, neither did it admit of any altogether escaping observation.

“Follow boldly!” said Myrtle; “there is no other way; a minute hence and it will be too late.”

With quick step she started forward, again followed by Henrich and Blanche; but scarcely were they in motion, when two soldiers, hastening directly towards them, struck new terror into their hearts. But Myrtle advanced a step to meet them, preventing their close approach to her companions: “Go quickly, and ring the chapel bell!” she said; “why do you loiter here, where you can do no good?”

Zealous to do something, and glad of such a commission, the men rushed forward to the church, and left the way unobstructed. But a more serious impediment was at hand. Carlton was among those who had turned at the command of the baron, to prosecute the search in the vicinity of the river, and he had since wandered aimlessly about in every direction, giving a multiplicity of useless instructions to all whom he met, with his usual bustling inefficiency. He was now almost directly in the route of the fugitives, of whom he caught sight nearly at the moment that Myrtle, with quick eye, recognised his figure, and diverged from her course in a direction towards the rear of the castle. Discerning female forms, but entirely unsuspecting of the character of the party, he still approached in a direction to intercept them. There was no evading the encounter, without the most direct flight, and in a few seconds he was at the side of Myrtle, who, as before, had advanced a little to meet him.

“Ah, ha! are you out in this tumult, Miss Myrtle?” he said, speaking quickly; “isn’t it a marvellous affair—a forcible abduction! was ever the like heard! But we shall have him—we shall have him; who are these with you?”

As he spoke he gave a quick start of surprise, but immediately

added, with seeming equanimity, "Ah, ha! I see: Miss Roselle and—and Lieutenant Seabury, I presume." So saying he turned away, with quick step, towards a small party of soldiers who were passing at a little distance, leaving the greatly relieved friends at liberty to pass on, which they now did with increased speed; but only for a moment. A shout and rush were heard behind them—an order to stand; and Carlton again made his appearance in the rear of three soldiers, who rushed breathlessly upon Henrich, and bore him to the ground.

The screams of the ladies, and the repeated calls of the count for more help, were followed by the rapid running of people from all quarters towards the point of attraction, while the dignified Carlton continued to announce to the successive comers, the triumphant event:

"He's caught! he's caught! I did it myself! I found him! hold on to him there, boys! another man to each of his arms! there, don't let him slip: the baron will be here in a moment; I've sent for him—ha! ha! I did it myself!"

Central amidst this group, when at length permitted to rise, stood Henrich—a prisoner, pinioned, hooted, derided, and mute; the agitation of hope and suspense was past—his was the silent serenity of despair.

CHAPTER XXXI.

“I see thou art implacable, more deaf
 To prayers than winds and seas: yet winds and seas
 Are reconciled at length, and sea to shore:
 Thy anger, unappeasable, still rages,
 Eternal tempest—never to be calm.”

Milton's Samson Agonistes.

IN a dungeon rayless as his heart, Henrich passed the ensuing night—a night, which to more than one of the inmates of Castle Montaigne was replete with prolonged misery; a night dilated by terror, until its moments became minutes, its minutes hours, and its every hour a long age of anguish and suspense. Montaigne had preserved an ominous silence in relation to the prisoner, utterly refusing all intercourse with any one upon the subject, and giving no other clew to his design in regard to him than could be derived from a knowledge of the ignominious place of his confinement. Vainly did Blanche seek again and again her father's apartment; vainly did she send message after message to beg a moment's interview; she received no answer; her envoys could not even penetrate to the presence of the forest autocrat.

In the morning, Carlton alone was summoned to his room, and the sanguinary nature of a decree emanating from such a tribunal may well be anticipated.

“He should die, if he had a thousand lives!” said the baron, striding excitedly to and fro in his apartment, while the gratified count stood listening to the ebullitions of his wrath, and feeding, from time to time, its flame: “the disgrace shall be wiped out and for ever; a

pardoned mutineer and spy—he has revived his crimes, and added to them sacrilege, and the kidnapping of my own child !”

“ Besides,” replied the count, “ with him will be buried the knowledge of some circumstances, which—are all right, you know, but which might be misconstrued by an uncharitable world.”

The baron knit his brow, angry that his secret thoughts had been probed by his partner in guilt.

“ I do not shrink from my acts, sir count,” he said ;—“ or deprecate the censure of mortal man. The intended marriage *was* right, and shall yet be consummated ; it’s only obstacle will now be removed, for mortifying as the fact may be, Blanche has evidently felt or fancied some attachment for this miscreant. Enough, however, of this ; it was not to decide whether he shall die, that I have called on you ; for justice, honor, and the preservation of discipline alike require this ; I only hesitate whether to accord him a soldier’s death.”

“ He is not a soldier,” answered Carlton.

“ He is not a coward,” replied Montaigne, calling, undesignedly, the quick blood to the cheek of the other ; “ and he has done us some service, although out of no good will, and only in the prosecution of his own most presumptuous purposes.”

“ Yes, certainly, of course ; ah, I think you had better hang him,” said the count, taking a pinch of snuff.

“ But then the other is a simpler process,” said the baron, “ and can be more quickly despatched—it is only to call out a file of soldiers and the prisoner, give the word of command, and it is all over—what say you ?”

The idea of despatch struck the count favorably : “ Perhaps it would be best,” he answered : “ I believe you are right : the gallows would add nothing to his infamy.”

“ It is decided then : go if you please, and send Sergeant Grill to me.”

The count bowed and departed, and in a few minutes the sergeant entered the apartment where Montaigne was now quietly seated with

no trace of excitement on his calm stern face. Grill was a very machine in everything pertaining to discipline; his obedience was as perfect as clock-work, and had almost as little to do with any degree of ratiocination. That an act was ordered by a superior officer was to him as ample a justification of it, as if its propriety had been shown by more than Euclidian demonstration; and as he now made his appearance in the baron's presence, everything in his air and step, and in the quick, sharp tones of his responding voice, spoke the rigid martinet.

"Sergeant Grill," said the baron, with more of a mild and condescending air, than was wont to characterize his deportment to his inferiors: "Sergeant Grill will have anticipated that the outrage of yesterday can have but one issue. The offender dies at noon, to-day; he is to be shot, on the green, behind the barracks. You will detail a dozen men for this duty, and report to me when everything is in readiness."

The precisian bowed stiffly.

"There will be a strong interest made to save him," continued the baron, "and I may be compelled to hear some petitions and lamentations; if you find me thus engaged, when you call to make your report, remember that the raising of my finger thus, is a signal for you to proceed, and while the work is being done, I can hear the childish supplications through; the easiest way to answer a foolish remonstrance is by showing that it is made too late, and the sentence being once executed, acquiescence will speedily follow. If I am not prevented by any such annoyances, I will myself attend the execution. Do you understand?"

"I do—I am to report to you when everything is in readiness; if I find you engaged, this motion," he said, repeating the one made by Montaigne, "will be a signal to go on without further orders."

"Meanwhile," added Montaigne, "you will hold communication with no one on the subject, excepting at once to announce to the prisoner his fate, and provide him a priest, if he desires."

Grill again bowed and departed.

Blanche, in the meantime, with the aid of both Myrtle and Emily, had exhausted every effort to learn the situation of Henrich, and the nature of the punishment which was designed for him. They knew only that he was in the dungeon, and that the passage which led to it was guarded by sentinels who permitted no approach to the prisoner. Miss Montaigne, despite her knowledge of her father's severity, indulged a strong hope that when the first fierceness of his anger had cooled, he would not prove sanguinary or unrelenting; she entertained indeed, no faintest suspicion of the secret sentence already pronounced upon her friend, nor dreamed that he could be doomed to death without some show of trial, either civic or martial. When that should take place, said whispering Hope, she would herself, if necessary, plead his cause; she would move the stony hearts of his judges; she would in some way, by some unyielding importunity, win lenity in his behalf, although it must be the lenity of perpetual banishment from her presence.

Secret, however, as had been Montaigne's movements, they could not long be concealed, and it was the knowledge of this fact which had induced him to appoint so early an hour for the execution. Conjecture had been rife among his retainers and dependants, ever since the moment of Henrich's capture, as to the punishment to be inflicted upon him, and the first note of preparation for the sad tragedy was heralded by the busy tongue of rumor in every direction.

Blanche sat in her own apartment, wearied with exhausting fears, and awaiting the return of Emily and Myrtle, both of whom, with untiring assiduity, had sought to encourage and soothe her, and were now absent on some mission of inquiry and observation. The door opened, and Miss Roselle, pale as a ghost, entered and sank trembling at her cousin's feet, vainly seeking to speak the words which faltered on her lips; while Myrtle, with extended arms and dishevelled hair, came flying behind her, not voiceless indeed, yet

scarcely more intelligible in her incoherence, than Emily in her silence.

“They will not do it! they will not do it, dear Blanche,” she said; “do not be frightened; oh, my father cannot, will not be so cruel.”

“What is it that you mean, Myrtle—Emily? speak quickly, if you would not see me die.”

“He is to be shot,” faltered Emily, “within an hour!”

“IT SHALL NOT BE!” exclaimed Blanche, springing to her feet, and looking upwards with a face from which grief and terror had been driven by a look of the most lofty resolution; “IT SHALL NOT BE! Thrice has he saved my life, and now—God of Heaven, hear my vow! I will save his, or die at his side!”

She passed with quick step from the room as she spoke, motioning to her friends to follow, and in another minute the three were at the door of the baron’s state apartment. A soldier, acting as door-keeper, who was stationed there for no other purpose than to save Montaigne from the importunities which he anticipated, informed the ladies that they could not enter; but Blanche, without reply, sprang past the surprised sentinel, as he spoke, and opening the unlocked door, rushed into the room, followed by her companions. The baron and the count were together, seated, and earnestly conversing; the latter rose; the former remained sitting, with fierce and frowning aspect.

“You have sentenced him to die!” said Blanche, standing before her father, with flashing eyes and pallid face, and quailing not at a look, which, under other circumstances, would have paralysed her frame; “you have sentenced him to die, and would have kept it from us! Now hear me; for I have come, not to beg, but to *demand* his release. By your sense of justice,—by the honor of your ancient family,—by your self-respect, and your hopes of happiness, here and hereafter,—murder not the man who has been thrice the preserver of your daughter’s life—whose single arm saved us all from destruction, when this miserable man played the coward and poltroon.”

She cast a look of unutterable scorn at the count as she spoke, and again fastened her gaze upon her father's face, searching for some yielding expression.

"Go on!" said the baron, fixing his stony eye upon his daughter, with such relenting as the rock yields to the rose.

"For *yourself* I speak," she said, breathing hard with the violence of her emotion,—“lay not this sin upon your soul! nay, you dare not do it!” she continued, with sudden vehemence, and with a return of that remarkable expression which assimilated her countenance so nearly to that of the man she was addressing; “you may be absolute here; but while from yon bending sky, God and angels watch your actions, you *dare not* do it! Oh, my father, my father!” she added, unable long to sustain so unwonted a part, and frightened by a changed expression in his face, which, whatever its character, was not mercy; “save him! pardon him! spare—oh, spare his life!”

Emily and Myrtle added their earnest supplications, the latter now sinking to her knees before her father, and now clinging to his neck, and imploring, with prolonged and plaintive accents, a remission of the prisoner's doom.

“For Blanche's sake,” she said, “for poor dear Blanche—do not be angry for her words; it was but your own high spirit which spoke in her; oh, have pity on her, father, or she will surely die.”

“You have all spoken,” said the baron, at length; “is there any one else? I think I hear voices at the door.”

“The baroness, if you please, sir, wishes to come in,” said the sentinel, thrusting in his head.

“Admit her!” he continued, with the same calm voice; “we will hear them all. Are you also, madam, a petitioner for the prisoner?”

“Yes—oh, yes,” said the frightened woman, clasping her hands and looking everywhere excepting in the face of her lord; “but you will not hear *me*—but Myrtle! Myrtle!” she whispered; “speak to him—the time is short!”

“Myrtle has spoken,” replied Montaigne, “and I will now answer you all——”

“The Lynx, if you please, my lord, desires to come in,” said the doorkeeper, again making his appearance.

“Let him come,” replied the baron; and the Indian stalked silently but swiftly to the front of the tribunal, around which so many suitors were clustered. He was dressed with elaborate care; his scalp-lock was trimmed and adjusted with unusual neatness, and his exposed chest was painted as for some expected ceremonial.

“The Lynx will die for Henrich!” he said: “the soldiers of my cousin shall plant their balls here,” touching his breast—“not in the heart of the young Brave of Manahatta!”

The baron scowled ominously as he listened, but before he could reply, the door again opened, and the Algonquin was announced.

“Show him in!” said Montaigne, now folding his arms, and throwing himself back in his chair with an air of composed determination: “show him in, Francis, and please to step aside and leave the way free for future comers; your labors must be wearisome.”

The Indian stationed himself beside his red brother, and looking at the baron, said: “My warriors have heard that the young Brave of the south must die, and their eyes are wet. Let him live, and they will heap your hearth with the scalps of the Iroquois for his ransom; the King of the Hurons is not cruel; he will spare his young brother, and the hearts of our tribes will be glad.”

“I have heard you all—patiently and attentively,” said the baron, looking at his watch as he spoke, and glancing towards the door with an expectant air: “you are all my friends, and if I cannot give you reasons that are satisfactory, within a few minutes, why I ought not to listen to your requests—I will hear you further.”

Sergeant Grill entered the room at this moment, and stood just within the door, erect and motionless.

“I say nothing,” continued the baron, “of the nature of the opposition which I meet to-day in the exercise of my most undoubted

and legitimate powers—the punishment of an atrocious criminal—of the almost mutinous manner in which I am beset on every hand for his pardon, as if——”

The speaker paused, and catching the eye of the watchful sergeant, made the preconcerted signal to the latter to withdraw, and fulfil his work, and as the officer silently departed, he continued—

“——as if I were incompetent to administer the laws of my own domain—nay, with a spirit that imputes to me more than the guilt of the accused, and would hold him innocent. For this cause alone which strikes at the very foundation of my authority, I should be compelled to deny your requests; when I add to them the heinous nature of the crimes to be punished—crimes both private and political—committed by a citizen of a country with which we are at war,—while he was in fact receiving our protection——”

The baron paused, and looked impatiently at his watch, and then, turning towards the window, assumed a listening attitude:

“——and—and—our hospitality; when all these things are considered, I say, it becomes a matter of surprise that any should be found who could indulge the hope of lenity to the prisoner. Some of you, who know nothing of the principles of government, or of the degree of rigidity in its laws which is essential to its safety, are more excusable: but there are those here,” he added, glancing at the Indians, “who compel me to remind them that I have lately overlooked serious offences of their own—offences which have led indirectly, to this very crime, which is to-day to be expiated.”

“No—no—no—oh say not so, my father——” Blanche replied rapidly, and in tones of agony—“you will at least take one day for deliberation; you will hear his defence—his vindication—you will not—cannot condemn him unheard?”

“*Unheard?*” answered the baron in a voice of grating harshness—“*unheard?* Have I not myself been a spectator of his crime? Shall I summon witnesses to prove what my own eyes have beheld?”

“But you will take *one day*—oh, *one day* for reflection,” she continued with choked and tremulous articulation, and extending her clasped hands towards her parent; “let it at least not be with the setting of *this* sun that he dies; think—oh think, if to-morrow you should regret it—it will then be for ever too late.”

“If to-morrow I should—regret it,” replied the baron, slowly: “if to-morrow I should—regret it—then—” and again the speaker paused—and *listened!*

His gaze was outward, through the window, and Blanche, whose eyes were fixed upon his, seemed suddenly electrified by their expression; a dreadful suspicion flashed upon her mind, and uttering a piercing scream, she sprang to the door, and in another breath, her shrieks were heard from without, as she darted along the hall and into the inner court of the castle. In a moment everything was uproar and confusion; Myrtle and Emily rushed in pursuit, and the Lynx, catching with quick suspicion the meaning of the movement, leaped, like a loosened tiger, through the doorway.

Blanche meanwhile, whose eyes, running rapidly over the ground, had failed to discover the dreaded sight which she anticipated, had taken a direction towards the barracks, and turned the corner of the buildings just as the quick sharp voice of Sergeant Grill rang upon the air, and the presented arms of the soldiers waited but the final monosyllabic order, to pour forth their deadly contents. Her white robes flashed for a moment on the eyes of the astonished soldiers, as she passed directly in front of their upraised weapons, and in the same moment, stood panting and speechless before the kneeling prisoner. Her form intercepted the view of his; her arms were extended—her chest rose and fell with the stormy violence of her emotion, and flashing eye, and flaring nostril, and quivering lip, spoke the raging tumult within.

“Remove her!” shouted Grill, and one from the line stepped quickly forward for that purpose, but, ere he had reached Miss Montaigne, the Lynx was at her side, menacing, with drawn knife, the approaching soldier, who hesitated and looked back for aid.

The Huron meanwhile addressed Henrich, whose bandaged eyes had, up to this moment, taken no cognisance of the strange interruption to the melancholy drama.

“I have come to die for you, my brother,” he said, quickly removing the handkerchief from the prisoner’s face; “the King of the Hurons will hear my words, for the Lynx is a chief, and hundreds of warriors shout his battle-cry; rise, my brother, and when you return to Manahatta, tell the Wappeno dogs that the Lynx was not afraid to die.”

But ere he had finished speaking, other actors were added to the scene; Emily and Myrtle had arrived, followed at a short interval by the baron, the count, and the Algonquin Indian.

“See how rapidly spreads the contagion of mutiny and treason!” shouted Montaigne. “Sergeant Grill, remove these, and complete your work; let Miss Montaigne be conveyed to her room; you, sir, must answer for this delay!”

“Hear me, my father, once more!” exclaimed Blanche, maintaining her position by clinging to the arm of the Huron, whom no one seemed disposed to interfere with; “spare but his life,—send him forth in ignominy and alone, to regain his home,—and I here promise to be obedient to all your requests; I promise, within two days, peaceably and unrepining, to become, if you desire it, the bride of Count Carlton;” she glanced shudderingly at the latter as she spoke; “but if you will not hear me, I here solemnly swear that I will never accede to your wishes; never shall this man clasp hand of mine while I have life and strength to prevent it. Here will I stay, until torn by force away; and him, whom, living, I might have forgotten, dead, I will for ever love; he shall be enshrined in my heart, and while life endures, it shall have no other occupant.”

As the baron looked around, he saw, through an open gateway, a crowd of Huron warriors looking with sullen aspect upon the scene, and recognised them as the immediate followers of the Lynx; they were doubtless assembled, unbidden; yet, in the present excited

state of all parties, there might be serious danger in attempting to arrest the Huron, or in applying any force to compel him to abandon his position. Blanche's resolute language, and above all, her promise to consent to a marriage with Carlton, had nearly moved him to a compliance, which only the strong pride of will restrained; but now even that yielded.

"I accept your terms, Miss Montaigne," he said; "and be assured, I shall hold you most strictly to them; this miserable man shall receive lenity,—such lenity as consists with an immediate banishment from the territory of New France, under penalty of instant death if found after twelve hours upon our soil. Sergeant, remove your men!"

Blanche had been excited to the last endurable degree of intensity; a sudden reaction now took place, which reduced her to a state of stupor and bewilderment bordering on a swoon. When she recovered, she was in her own apartment, and Huntington was already without the castle walls.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"—if to robe

This form in bridal ornaments, to smile
 (I *can* smile yet,) at thy gay feast, and stand
 At th' altar by thy side; if this be deemed
 Enough, it shall be done"

MRS. HEMANS.—*The Vespers of Palermo.*

MORE malignant than Montaigne, and equally inexorable, Count Carlton had hoped and believed that the baron would not yield either to emotions of pity or fear; but when he reflected upon the conditions with which pardon had been coupled, he did not deeply regret the turn which events had taken. Huntington was perpetually banished, and Blanche had bound her conscience by a solemn promise to become his bride within two days; so that, after all, as he argued the matter to himself, everything had turned out for the best, as it always does to the virtuous and just.

Miss Montaigne, meanwhile, counted her remaining hours of freedom, and watched their departure with a miser's jealous care. She had no design of retracting the dreadful pledge which she had given, or of shrinking from a fulfilment of her contract; she had purchased Henrich's life; and, fearful as the price must prove, she resolved to pay it without a murmur; the solace of her act would at least remain to her while life endured, which returning hope suggested could not be long.

Emily proved an assiduous and zealous, if not altogether a discreet friend, in the hour of her cousin's calamity.

“Cheer up, dear Blanche,” she said, when, on the evening of the day in which the exciting events last related had occurred, they sat together in the apartment of Miss Montaigne; “the worst, at least, is escaped; and as to the rest—why, you are not the first lady who has lost a lover—nor is it so dreadful a fate to become a countess, after all.”

Blanche sat by an open casement, looking with fixed and vacant gaze upon the distant forests; but her senses took little cognizance of what was passing before them, and the words of Emily did not wound.

“It will be all the same a hundred years hence,” Miss Roselle continued, using one of those consolatory maxims which are ever at the tongue’s end of people who know nothing of misery by experience; “you will forget it very soon, I assure you, particularly when you reach Paris. I wonder, by the way, if they have any decent stuff in Quebec for dresses: nothing fit for a bride, I’ll be bound; and as to Henrich, you need not grieve on his account; he’ll be safely home in a week, and will think no more about it; I should not wonder, indeed, if he were married in three months to somebody else.”

Blanche remained heedless, and Emily, becoming conscious that her words were not heard, ceased to speak, only resuming her efforts at long intervals, and starting a dozen different themes with the vain hope of arousing her cousin’s attention. Miss Montaigne did not weep, nor did any external signs mark her misery, excepting the pallid cheek, and absent air, and that still stupor of deportment which speaks the paralysis of the heart. If she found voice, at times, it was only to inquire, with a repetition that evinced a wandering mind, the particulars of Henrich’s departure.

“Did not some one tell me that he went away with the good Lynx,” she asked, “and that the Indian promised to send some one with him on his journey?”

“Yes, Blanche, they went out of the castle yard together, and

the Huron told Myrtle this evening, that he had sent four strong men with Henrich, who were to accompany him as far as the Horicon lake; they started an hour before sun-down, and are now, of course, far on their way."

"If you should ever see him again, Emily," she said solemnly, fixing her lustreless eyes upon Miss Roselle—"if ever—when I am gone—tell him—what I have never told him—tell him—for it will be no sin then—that my whole heart was his—that I died thinking of him,—praying for him!"

"Blanche, dear Blanche, do not talk thus!" exclaimed Emily; "you speak wildly: the scenes which you have gone through have been too much for you."

"You are right, cousin Emily," replied Miss Montaigne; "they *have been too much* for me," and she relapsed again into her dreamy and silent state, from which no efforts could rouse her, excepting for a very moment's interval.

This continued through the whole of that and the ensuing day, greatly to the apprehension of her female friends, who vainly sought to alarm her father, by representing her condition, and to prevail on him to desist, at least for a time, from his design. He would listen to no representations; it was a ruse—a feint; he would not again be baffled; he had her promise, from which she did not even ask to be released. Besides, he said, delay would but make matters worse, and when once she was married, all these whims would quickly be dispelled; the excitement of a wedding journey would of itself work wonders, for they were to set out at once for Quebec, to spend a few days with the Marquis Vaudreuil, and if Blanche chose, they would thence proceed directly to Paris; and Emily and Myrtle were informed, by way, perhaps, of a bribe to their acquiescence, that they should both accompany the bridal party as far as the former place.

The preparations, indeed, went rapidly forward, and when the morning of the second day arrived, there was no longer a dissent-

ing voice to the ceremony, for Emily and Myrtle had found it useless to remonstrate, and Blanche seemed more unconscious of what was passing around her than usual. The two days which had been stipulated for would not expire until noon of the day which had now set in, and it was resolved that the marriage should take place in the evening, in the adjacent chapel, which was to be brilliantly lighted for the purpose, and various preparations for celebrating the event, in and about the castle, were also in progress.

Count Carlton, elated beyond expression with his prospects, was busily engaged in superintending a part of the festive arrangements, and at about mid-day he mounted a horse and rode forth, in search of the Lynx and the Algonquin, who were expected respectively to head processions of warriors of their tribes in honor of the occasion. The Lynx was easily found, for the principal village of his people was close at hand, but Anak's abode was more distant, being situated several miles southward, and thither with light heart the Count pursued his way. He found the Algonquin, like the Huron, acquiescent with the Baron's wishes, for although neither entered with alacrity into the proposed arrangements, they were convinced that they could do nothing further for Henrich, and were not unwilling either to display themselves in their gala dresses, or to participate in the expected feastings. Having parted with the last named Indian, with a great show of cordiality, not forgetting to bestow a few appeasing presents upon the stately brave, Carlton set out on his return, rejoicing that his star was at last in the ascendant and that the hour of his triumph had arrived.

Alas! how sad the contrast between his bliss and the anguish with which the hapless Henrich had gone forth on his lonely way! What a night of wretchedness was that, in which, re-traversing his recent route, he glided, in his little bark, over the now resisting current of the Sorelle, and re-entered the broad waters of the Champlain! What a weary day of hopeless, joyless, leaden-winged hours again succeeded, in which, with vain regret, his eyes measured the

still widening distance which separated him from his lost friend, or dwelt idly upon the far northern sky, which bent tranquilly above her abode.

At the close of the day succeeding that on which he left Castle Montaigne, he was aroused from a reverie into which he had fallen by feeling a sudden grasp upon his arm, and as he looked up to the Indian who had thus familiarly touched him, he became conscious that he had already been earnestly addressed several times, by name, and doubted not that there was some unusual cause for accosting him. His conjecture did not prove erroneous; they had been skirting the eastern shore of the lake, looking for a favorable place to encamp for the night, and had just doubled a small cape or promontory, when a sight had met the eyes of the Indians, which seemed at once to have astounded and rendered them incapable of action. Well might it do so, for on the shore, scarcely forty rods distant from them, was a regular military encampment, while a fleet of batteaux, about fifty in number, lay moored upon the beach.

Henrich's canoe had been discovered, and a dozen men were rushing towards it on the shore, while others were leaping into boats for the purpose of pursuit; flight would have been so utterly useless that the Indians did not once attempt it, and in another moment Henrich became happily conscious that for him, at least, it was not desirable, for the force which they had encountered, whatever its design or destination, was evidently English. He instructed the men to row immediately to the shore in the direction of the soldiers who were approaching, himself standing up, meanwhile, in the boat, and signifying to the strangers, by amicable signs, his design of submission.

Having landed, he requested to be taken to the commanding officer, who, seated in his tent, received him with much apparent curiosity and interest; he was a middle-aged man, seemingly of a quick mercurial temperament, and giving evidence by his equipment of no small rank. He at once addressed Huntington in French,

demanding his name and residence, and seemed astonished when the latter replied politely to him in his own language, giving the desired information. There was an air of incredulity, however, in his manner, as he rejoined :

“What do you here, Mr. Huntington, in this wilderness, near an enemy’s border, and accompanied by hostile Indians? You are not their prisoner; they seem rather to be your guard.”

“They are such,” replied Henrich, “and I have come, as you perhaps surmise, from the enemy’s territory; under these circumstances, I know that you will consider it your duty to detain me, and I therefore will not occupy your time by explanations that I have no means of verifying; more especially as my detention will contribute to my security, and will afford me the means of safely regaining my home.”

Major Bain smiled as he replied to the young man, with whose frank and ingenuous air he was not a little pleased :

“I shall at least be compelled to detain your men, Mr. Huntington, and you could not safely proceed without them; you may also consider yourself under arrest, until I have time to make further inquiries; but you will be compelled to retrace your steps, and perhaps to see, if you should not be disposed to participate in, some military operations of moment.”

“May I inquire,” asked Henrich, with great interest, “which way your expedition points?”

“We are going where we are very little expected,” replied the officer, excitedly; “further I would not say at present, but every soul in the camp knows our destination, and I shall endeavor to make up by the celerity of our movements, for the want of their secrecy—we go, in short, to smoke out of his castle, a certain Robin Hood knight here in the north, of whom you must have heard, whose insolence, long extreme, has latterly grown insufferable, and has justified the fitting out of an expedition against him, in his own retreat.”

“Is it possible that you mean ——”

“The Baron Montaigne!” replied the major, “no one else; the governors of New York and New England have each contributed a small force to the enterprise, and we are altogether sure of our game. I speak freely to you, Mr. Huntington, because I may perhaps be able to offer you service which you would be glad to accept: one of our officers has been deserted, sick, at an Indian settlement, and ——”

“It is impossible,” replied Huntington, “that I should avail myself of your generous offer; there are reasons which I will give you in private, why I can take no part in your expedition, further than to accompany it as a spectator.”

Henrich retired from this interview with emotions the most thrilling and exciting; alarm for the safety of Blanche and his other friends at the castle, had been his first generous feeling, but this had been succeeded by dawning hopes, the brilliancy of which he scarcely dared to contemplate. These, in their turn, gave way to other thick-coming fears and fancies; the army would arrive too late to prevent the nuptials of the count; the baron would make a triumphant resistance, or a successful retreat; or a capitulation would admit him to retire with his family to Quebec, and give up his castle to his invaders.

Either of these results was, in fact, more probable than that any favorable change would ensue to his own fortunes from the events in progress—yet there was pleasure in the thought that he might once more behold the object of his affection, even if it were but to speak a last farewell. His duty, at least, was clear; he was compelled to accompany the invaders; but his position demanded a most perfect neutrality of conduct; neither by action nor advice might he assist his country's enemies—nor, while so many of his personal friends were in their midst, aid to discomfit them. Whatever, by intercession or otherwise, he could effect for their benefit, if his people proved victorious, that it would, of course, be his privilege

and delight to do, and with such a conclusion, he sought for a while to dismiss the agitating theme from his mind, and to find that composure to which he had been so long a stranger.

He strolled about the camp and found amusement in observing the heterogeneous materials of which the little army was composed; its numbers amounted to about five hundred, of whom full one half were Indians of various tribes in alliance with the English, and the remainder were regular troops. The expedition had been set on foot by Governor Cornbury, who, conscious of his present inability to make any formal invasion of Canada, had resolved at least to strike a blow upon one of its strongholds, and inflict signal vengeance for a series of aggressions which had emanated from that particular source. The movement had long been in contemplation, and had been hastened now by the recent capture of Lieutenant Seabury, and by the governor's anxiety to effect his release. Cornbury, indeed, had scarcely indulged the hope of seizing Montaigne, whose vigilance was as proverbial as his valor—but he did not doubt that he should be able to drive him from his castle, and to destroy, not only that fastness, but the neighboring Indian villages.

The enterprise was not without its peril, and there were not wanting those who predicted its failure, and asserted the utter insufficiency of the invading force to accomplish its object. Major Bain, however, felt confident that a prompt movement, which would not allow Montaigne to summon aid from Montreal, or from the more distant Indians, must be as successful, as a dilatory one would certainly be disastrous, even if made with thrice his strength. He was a brave man, and had long fretted under the inaction of a command in Albany, which had afforded him no active service, and he exulted in his present mission, to which, indeed, his own energetic counsels had not a little contributed.

“You have a motley collection here,” said Huntington, to a serjeant off duty, who had addressed him civilly as he passed, and

from whom he hoped to glean some farther information about the contemplated attack.

"Yes, sir," replied the officer, "white, red, and black—it is a queer-looking army, indeed, but they are all brave men, even the negroes."

"You do not mean that you have any negro soldiers, I presume?" enquired Henrich, "they would be rare allies indeed."

"Not exactly soldiers," was the reply; "but Major Bain has a couple of servants who profess themselves quite ready for duty, and then there is a long droll fellow, who insisted on joining us at Albany—probably a runaway slave; he makes great fun for the soldiers, and is the very pet of the Indians; he is as strong, too, they say, as the giant Goliath."

"Ki! Massa Henreek!" exclaimed a familiar voice at this moment in Huntington's ear, while the rapid evolutions of a body turning a somerset at his side, attracted his attention. "Oh jingo! if dis don't beat all nater! Oh Massa Henreek, but dis is de 'markablest luck dat ebber was."

Amazed at the appearance of the seemingly ubiquitous African, Huntington for some moments scarcely found voice to address him; but he extended his hand at length, cordially, to the negro, smiling as he spoke.

"Remarkable, indeed, Harry!" he said; "what in the world has brought you here, and how is it that you did not return to New York, as you intended?"

"I wuz waitin', Mass Henreek, at Albany for de opptoonity, when I hare of dis ere 'spedition—dey stop dare—dey say dey come to take Castle Mountain; it frighten me berry much, kaze I t'ought of you and Missa Blanche, and Missa Emily, and I didn't know what might happen, and I t'ought I better come along—I 'clare, Massa Henreek, I berry glad to see you."

"And I am very glad to see *you*, Harry! This is the second

time we have met most unexpectedly; I hope we shall not part again until we return together to New York."

"Ki! Massa Henrich, but I tickled to hare you say dat: ony let me stay by you, and I can do any ting—but tell-a me, what you trampoose about so much alone for? I find you, afore, all alone in de woods."

"Then," replied Huntington, "I was the victim of guile and treachery: where you found me, Carlton had deserted me, forcing me to quit his boat, a crime which has since been followed by others, still worse; you shall know more of it, perhaps, hereafter."

Harry listened with marked attention to this brief exposition, but made no other reply than might be contained in an expressive shake of the head and a harsh grating of the teeth.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

“ O'er the rolling waves we go,
Where the stormy winds do blow,
To quell with fire and sword the foe.”—*Old Song.*

As the evening advanced, and Henrich was contemplating retirement for the rest which he so much needed, he was surprised and delighted to hear orders issued for re-embarking, and on seeking for the cause of so unexpected a movement, he encountered the polite Major Bain, who was personally superintending the preparations.

“ We travel by night, you perceive, Mr. Huntington,” he said ; “ our camp was pitched at dawn, and you must allow that our Indian guides have selected an unequalled hiding-place here for an army, where no intruder could discover us, without being first seen by our sentinels.”

“ I have neither seen nor heard of any sentinels,” replied Henrich, “ and have been wondering at your remissness in that respect.”

“ They saw *you*, however, I assure you, full half an hour before you so valorously invaded us,” said the major, smiling ; “ there are a dozen glowing eyes on each of these hills, sleepless as the stars, and commanding every point of the compass ; I can well believe that you have not seen them, for if they were wrapt in that magic mantle which is said to confer invisibility, they would not be less easily found ; in fact, I don't know exactly where they are myself ; my friend Kogegogy there, with the black feather, planted them,

and will bring them in, I presume, presently with some forest signal."

Major Bain offered Huntington a seat in his own boat, and everything being in readiness, the fleet started at about eight o'clock, and pursued their way with great rapidity. The ardor of the commanding officer would scarcely permit him to confine his travel to the night, which, indeed, in its earlier stages he had not done; but as he came farther north, his Indian counsellors had urged the point as so certainly essential to the project of surprising the garrison at Montaigne, that he had yielded to their advice. Let but one distant eye, they said, catch a sight of the armament, and scores of runners, fleet as the wind, would bear the news to the baron far in advance of their approach.

If Henrich had exulted at the unexpected embarkation of the army, his fears all returned when he comprehended the commander's design; for on the ensuing day at noon, terminated the stipulated time, at the end of which Blanche had promised to become the bride of Carlton, and he well knew that the marriage would not be deferred materially beyond that time. Major Bain intended to invest the castle silently by night, and as it was impossible, with any speed which they could command, to reach it before the ensuing morning, it could only be after another day's delay and concealment that they would approach the walls. That day, alas, Henrich had reason to apprehend, would be fatal to all his hopes, and the returning light which had illumined his heart, again gave way to the inroads of despair.

The commander had resolved, however, to make his next encampment as near the castle as prudence would permit, in order to learn by espionage its situation and means of defence, relying upon the sagacity of his Indian allies to ensure meanwhile his own concealment, and he succeeded greatly to his satisfaction, in attaining and entering the mouth of the Sorelle, just as the waning stars proclaimed the approach of day. Two hours more of darkness would

have enabled him, unseen, to place his forces at once under the walls of the enemy, but he did not greatly regret the delay, as his men were jaded with toil, and required rest to fit them for service.

As before, a favoring locality was found, for a secret camp, in a very dense part of the forest, about eight miles south of the castle, and here every precaution was taken to avoid discovery, sentinels being posted in hiding-places on every side, so that any wanderer who should be unfortunate enough to stray near the foe, would be tenfold more likely to be caught and conveyed into their midst than to escape and carry the tidings.

For several hours Major Bain was content to keep close in his spider-like retreat, well satisfied that there seemed no prospect of his being disturbed, but as the day advanced he resolved to send forth an emissary to the neighborhood of the castle to observe its condition. There was no difficulty in finding a messenger for such an errand among the valorous and crafty savages, who delighted in any achievement involving cunning and adroitness, and the commission fell upon a young Mohawk Brave, who was celebrated for sagacity. Being allowed to select a companion for his enterprise, his choice, to the great chagrin of his brethren, fell upon Harry, who could see, he said, as well as an Indian, and was three times as strong.

It was nearly noon when they left the camp, and proceeded in a canoe down the river about four miles, where they left their boat concealed, and taking opposite sides of the stream, continued their way on foot, carrying of course their usual weapons. They had been instructed to learn whether there were any Indian villages on the route to the castle, and it was for this purpose that they had separated, pursuing thenceforward independent courses, and expecting only to re-unite at nightfall at their canoe, after having completed their separate explorations.

Harry went about a mile further on his lonely way, and was proceeding cautiously through the forest, about a dozen rods from the

river side, when a sudden noise arrested his attention, and caused him to drop, skulking, among the thick bushes. Looking warily out from his covert, he saw a single horseman approaching at a slow amble through the woods, in the direction of a beaten path which led from the interior diagonally to the river. The road, if such it could be called, passed about twenty yards from the negro's place of concealment, and Harry, remaining silent, entertained no fears of discovery, more especially as the equestrian, so far from seeming observant or watchful, had an air of perfect ease and unconcern. As he drew nearer, the eyes of the vigilant African, which had been fixed unwaveringly upon him, dilated to a prodigious extent, and his surprise found vent in the whispered words,—

“Golly ! if it aint de count !”

The count it certainly was, who, as has been related, was returning at this hour from his interview with the Algonquin Indian, and was riding towards the castle, deeply wrapt in the contemplation of his approaching wedding.

“I aint afraid of *him*, any way,” said Harry ; “but den he mustn't see me, else he gib de alarm—unless—unless—oh, jingo !” and the negro clutched his large hands together, as if unable to restrain a wish that had suddenly formed in his mind.

“He got pistols,” continued the soliloquist ; “but dat aint nottin, —nottin at all ; be quick, Harry ! make up your mind !” he said, apostrophizing himself ; “see, he almost here ! he put Massa Henreek ashore, you know ; golly, *I'll do it !*” and the negro leaped like some wild animal, headlong from his lair, and, at three bounds, stood in front of the count, with one huge hand grasping the bridle of the rearing and plunging steed. The frightened rider, scarce able to tell whether his assailant was man or beast, was vainly trying to draw a pistol from his belt, when the disengaged hand of Harry was on his arm, and he felt himself dragged forcibly from his seat.

“Come a you down off dere,” said the negro, “and go along

wiv me ; dere's a gempleman ober here want to see you ;" and Carlton landed, shaking, at his side.

" Dis-a-way, ef you please," continued the negro, quickly regaining his gun, which he had dropped on the ground, and starting at once towards the English camp with his prisoner, while the freed horse scampered rapidly off ; " dis ere is de way—come along !"

Harry's motions had been so rapid and impetuous, that it was not until Carlton was whirled along in his powerful grasp that he found voice to speak ; and although he now began to pour forth a most voluble tide of ejaculations and prayers, they were in a language unintelligible to Harry ; and if it had been otherwise, they would scarcely have interrupted the flow of his own congratulatory soliloquy.

" I got him—dat a fact," he said ; and then, looking back for an instant, " I wish I brought de horse along ; but nebber mind—I got de count. What dat you say ? more blue ? yhah ! yhah ! it will be more blue dan dis for you, old boy !"

Carlton recognised his captor, at length, and his terror increased, if possible, when he did so ; for although he had no suspicion of the causes which had led to his misfortune, he did not doubt that his dreaded rival was at hand, and that the vengeance which conscious guilt told him was deserved, was destined now to overtake him. The discovery made him frantic with fear ; and finding his reiterated appeals to the negro unheeded, he grew courageous enough to suddenly draw a pistol with his disengaged hand ; for Harry, in his utter contempt of the little weapons, had forgotten to take possession of them. He observed the motion, however, in time to strike down the arm of the prisoner before any harm was effected, and snatching the pistols, he flung them with sudden wrath over the tree-tops.

" Gosh," he said, " you grow 'fract'ry, hay ? here, den, I'll show you ;" and the negro, taking from his shoulder one of a pair of thick leathern suspenders, proceeded to bind the wrists of the count tightly together ; after which, clutching him again by the arm, he

hurried along. A weary walk of five miles was before the pinioned man, for Harry did not consider himself at liberty to take the boat without the Indian's permission, and he reflected, moreover, that he would be far less liable to observation or interruption, in the woods, than on the river; he was a good pedestrian, however, and compelling his companion to nearly equal his own prodigious strides, the distance was soon overcome.

It was with no little surprise that Major Bain and his fellow officers beheld the negro returning to the camp with a prisoner of so distinguished appearance, and Henrich's astonishment and exultation cannot easily be imagined. He had not felt himself called upon to interfere with the movements of Harry, who had regularly joined the army at Albany, of his own volition, after being discharged from Huntington's service, and upon whom, indeed, he had not now the right to enjoin neutrality or inaction, if he had desired.

Carlton's amazement at finding himself in the camp of an invading enemy was without bounds; yet his alarm was rather diminished than increased, for he was now a prisoner of war, and not, as he had anticipated, the victim of personal retribution. He at once announced his name and rank, and claimed the privilege of his parole, which Major Bain, with a politeness that transcended his discretion, promptly accorded. That gallant officer was incapable of suspecting a depth of infamy in his prisoner which would render his word of honor an insufficient barrier to his escape, while, perhaps, the inconvenience of confining him, and the difficulty of flight, if attempted, contributed to a leniency, which, in the peculiar situation of the invading force, was at least impolitic.

Harry, who looked upon Carlton as peculiarly his prize, was by no means satisfied with the result, which he was quite unable to comprehend, and he continued to follow his released captive at a little distance about the camp, seldom removing his eyes from him, and indulging not infrequently in his accustomed mode of thinking aloud.

“He look as if he wuz loose,” he said, peering curiously at the arms and feet of the Frenchman. “Dey say he got a *parole* on him somewhere, but I can’t see it—golly, dey better lef de ’spender on, by half!”

When a soldier, with whom he conversed on the subject, had in some degree succeeded in explaining the nature of the invisible fetters which were supposed to bind the count, the African shook his head with marked significance.

“May be it will hold him,” he said, angrily; “but why dey no leave de ’spender on, and put anudder on his ancles, and den let him go on his parole, ef he want to?—Blazes!”

The Mohawk returned at dusk, and reported that he had been within pistol shot of Castle Montaigne, and had lain concealed an hour watching the movements of its inmates. There was no appearance of alarm, he said, or of any unusual vigilance; the principal gate was open, and there was much passing in and out, especially of the Hurons, who seemed to be dressed and painted for a powow; soldiers were lounging idly around the walls, and he had even seen the King of the Hurons talking with a chief in the gateway. He had discovered no Indian villages on the western side of the river, but had judged there was a Huron settlement on the eastern shore, and north of the castle, having seen numbers of that tribe approach and depart in that direction. The castle walls, he said, were of earth and timber, not more than two soldiers high, and hinted that they could be scaled by half the army, by a sort of leap-frog operation, over the shoulders of their fellows, a somewhat novel mode of storming a fortress, which Major Bain promised to take into consideration. He manifested much satisfaction at the intelligence received, and issued orders that everything should be in readiness for departure at the hour of ten.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"*Bellario*.—Are you not ill, my lord ?

Philaster.—Ill—no, *Bellario*.

Bellario.—Methinks your words

Fall not from off your tongue so evenly,
Nor is there in your looks that quietness
That I was wont to see."

Beaumont and Fletcher. Tragedy of Philaster.

THE prolonged absence of the count excited a surprise at the castle, which, as the day began to wane, grew into solicitude, and finally into serious anxiety. Messengers were despatched in every direction in search of him, and the baron, pacing the court of his castle with a perturbed air, awaited their return, and instituted meanwhile the closest inquiry of all his adherents as to the time and place in which the expected bridegroom had last been seen.

"He is coming, my lord," said one, entering with breathless haste while these investigations were pending; "he is coming under whip and spur, down the river road, just this side the woods; you can see him from the west gate."

A crowd rushed to the gateway, and the baron beheld with joy, for a moment, the distant spectacle which was pointed out to him; but as the equestrian drew near it soon became evident that it was not the count. A soldier, one of the searching party, had found the freed horse in the woods, and mounting him, had galloped home to convey the alarming intelligence. The utmost consternation now prevailed; another large detachment of soldiers and Indians

was sent out to search for the lost rider, to whom some casualty was supposed to have happened, but one which it was yet hoped might not prove of a serious character.

Ignorant for a while of the alarm, Blanche had remained in her room in painful expectation of the approaching ceremony, for the friendly stupor which had so long deadened her sensibilities had passed away, and left her keenly alive to all her sufferings. Emily brought to her the first tidings of Carlton's singular absence, exciting great astonishment, and a vague anticipation of relief which she was still unwilling to build upon the hope of a disaster to a fellow being. Not so, however, with Emily, who could not conceal the complacency with which she contemplated the subject, and enumerated the various fatal accidents that might have befallen the missing man.

"It is very shocking, of course," she said, "but he has doubtless been thrown, and had his neck dislocated; they can't re-set necks, I believe, can they? Or else, perhaps, some of the Hurons have way-laid him, and they always make sure work of what they take in hand—it is awful, certainly—but he's probably dead!"

Myrtle displayed much anxiety, and shuddered at the levity of Miss Roselle; a suspicion had taken possession of her mind, not unnatural to one to whom tales of murder and revenge were familiar as household words. Who knew, she asked, that Mr. Huntington had really departed? might he not be lurking in the wilderness, and might not his hand—?

"Mr. Huntington is no assassin!" answered Blanche, indignantly, yet not unalarmed at the horrid suspicion; "he is incapable of such an act."

"Nay, I said not that he had slain him," replied the abashed girl; "but he may have carried him off, or—"

"There is some new commotion below," interrupted Emily, looking from the window into the court of the castle; "a crowd is entering the gate, led by the Lynx; see! the baron advances to meet them, and the Indian is talking and gesticulating with much earnestness;

now he stoops and marks something on the ground ; look ! it is the track of a large foot ; now he holds up some little broken sticks, which he has brought with him ; what can it mean ? Wait, while I run and learn ; I will be back in a minute."

Emily departed ; and while both Blanche and Myrtle were yet trembling with the violence of their excitement, and watching the movements below, she returned.

"The Huron," she said, quickly, "has followed the trail of the horse in the woods to a place where the ground and leaves are much trampled, and where there are frequent marks of a huge foot, and also of the count's well known steps ; the horse has reared, he says, for there are deep dents in the soil, made by his hind shoes. Besides all this," she said, breathlessly, "the trail of the men leads southerly from that spot, and that of the horse in another direction ; three experienced path-finders are on the track, accompanied by a hundred men, and further news is expected every moment."

Myrtle turned pale as she listened, and left the room without reply, while Blanche, greatly moved, continued to gaze, expectantly, from the window.

The Lynx had made his discoveries in the presence of others who had also discerned the signs which he had so plainly construed ; and as they could not be kept secret, nor the chase restrained, he had done all that he could to retard it, by returning to the castle with the intelligence, leaving the pursuers to the guidance of less experienced trail-seekers than himself. For if Harry Bolt had left an engraved card on the scene of his exploit, bearing his name in full, it could not more distinctly have revealed his presence to enlightened eyes, than his footsteps had done to the Lynx. There was, indeed, no mistaking the sign ; the Indian knew every curve and angle of the prodigious track, and the very number of the hob-nails in either heel ; he had seen it on the banks of the Hudson, on the day of his first singular interview with Harry, and had perused it with unabated interest at every subsequent landing-place on their

joint route. How it came on the shore of the Sorelle, he considered it no part of his province to determine; *but there it was*, as legible as a signature or a countenance. The negro, he supposed, had in some way followed his master, and encountered him on his return, and they had together planned and executed the recent adventure, which he considered a gallant and daring act, every way justifiable, and he was by no means desirous to assist in defeating it. Yet, if he had apprehended for a moment the true state of affairs, no one would have been more prompt in repelling the approaching invasion of his country, at whatever sacrifice of personal feelings.

The baron remained in a state of momentarily increasing agitation, awaiting and receiving the successive tidings that reached him from the forest; but the night began to close in without anything decisive being heard, and an hour after dark a few of the pursuing party returned to the castle with the intelligence that they had followed the trail four miles, until the darkness prevented further search, and that the main body of pursuers had encamped in the woods, ready to resume their quest with the first return of light.

The count, in the meantime, as the hour for the embarkation of the invaders arrived, finding himself not only unguarded, but seemingly unwatched, began to contemplate the project of escape. One hour's warning, he knew, would enable the baron not only to make a successful defence of his post, but probably to utterly discomfit his foes, while without it everything would be irremediably lost. To retrieve his own fortunes, to avenge himself fully on Henrich and the exulting negro, and to close the exciting drama of his adventures by his own final triumph, what was there that he would not do to accomplish ends like these? Should an idle punctilio restrain him from reaping such a harvest of advantages? He had passed his word of honor, indeed; but was it not to a treacherous foe, who were themselves advancing stealthily upon their adversaries, with strategy and guile? Had he not himself been artfully and surreptitiously captured, and in no fair and open combat? Such were

some of the arguments with which the count fortified his growing resolution ; for when did infamy or crime ever lack extenuation in the breast of its perpetrator ?

The danger attending the deed scarcely occurred to his mind, for although he knew the penalty to which it would technically render him liable if the English should prove successful, and he should again fall into their hands, he did not conceive such a result possible, if the baron were once fully apprised of his peril ; and he apprehended, in no event, any extremity of punishment from the urbane officer, who had already shown so marked a consideration for his prisoner's rank and title. The risk, indeed, was slight in comparison with the vast benefits in prospect, and so busy was the captive in calculating the practicability of his scheme, and in overcoming the obstacles in its way, that he scarcely looked beyond.

A seeming opportunity at length occurred in the bustle of departure ; the vigilant Harry, his self-constituted guide, had been separated from him in the order of embarkation, and while the boats were put in readiness, and were receiving their respective occupants, Carlton stepped backward a little and observing that the movement was unnoticed, glided silently into the deeper shade of the forest, and then quickened his pace. In another moment he was running—plunging deeper into the sheltering woods—skulking through its densest shades, and listening with terror to the fancied sounds of pursuit. The escape was almost instantly discovered, yet no one could tell the precise time of the prisoner's departure, or the direction he had taken ; it was at once reported to the commanding officer, whose astonishment was unbounded, and yet was not greater than his wrath.

“It is idle to pursue,” he said ; “we must quicken our speed and try to outstrip the scoundrel ; yet our ignorance of the channel will impede us ; was ever such infamy heard of ? A gentleman—a count—and a commissioned officer, forfeiting his pledged honor !—let me but take the lying knave once more, and if he escape his deserts again, mine shall be the blame !”

CHAPTER XXXV.

“Ho! sound the tocsin from my tower—
And fire the culverin,—
Bid each retainer arm with speed,—
Call every vassal in.”

ALBERT G. GREENE.

It was a little before midnight that the exhausted count arrived at the castle gate, and ere he had succeeded in obtaining admittance the intelligence of his return had been diffused in every direction through the court, along the walls, and in every apartment of the building; so that by the time he had gained the principal hall, he was surrounded by an eager throng of soldiers, Indians, and domestics, who pressed unreprieved around him, to hear the story of his wonderful abduction and escape. Into the midst of this excited crowd rushed the delighted baron, just as with faint and panting voice Carlton was inquiring for him, while beckoning with one hand to keep his motley retinue back.

“Joy! joy! sir count, for your escape,” exclaimed Montaigne; “though from what danger we do not yet know; we have had great alarm ——”

“My lord! my lord!” gasped the pallid count, “there is an English army, six hundred strong, almost at your gates; I have been their prisoner and am but just escaped; they advance by the river, and may be under your walls in half an hour!”

“Let the drum beat to arms!” shouted Montaigne, with sudden animation and alarm, “yet, no! Lieutenant Leighton, muster

the men in perfect silence; see that the guns are trebly manned; place fifty musketeers on the western walls; quick, ho! extinguish these lights, and let every man to his post in silence. You, Francis and Mallory, fly to the Lynx and warn him of the danger; let another of your men, lieutenant, mount my best horse and speed to Anak with the news; Windfoot, you also may go—away! away! by St. Francis, but we will give them a reception they little dream of—but, hark! what noises are these?”

“My lord,” said a soldier, rushing breathlessly in, “the castle is attacked! an enemy is scaling the walls, and forming in the court, and three of the guns are already in their possession; Sergeant Grill is rallying the men and making a stand in front of the south wing, but he has only thirty men ——”

“Tell him to *charge* if he has but six!” shouted the baron; “quick, form your men, and follow, Leighton; I will stay them till you come!” and, springing through the doorway, in a moment he stood beside Grill, in front of the little band who had dauntlessly opposed themselves to tenfold their number. The darkness, however, had favored the minority, whose weakness was concealed, while the loud prompt accents in which the sergeant’s orders were issued, conveyed the idea that they were directed to a company of considerable strength, and induced the English commander to forbear an attack, until more of his own men were assembled.

“What say you?” cried the major, repeating a summons which had already been made upon the sergeant; “will you surrender, and save bloodshed? You are quite in my power; I have five hundred men, and I cannot answer for my Indian allies, if resistance is made.”

“On what terms?” asked Montaigne, anxious to gain time, yet speaking in tones of defiance which belied his professed willingness to negotiate,—“On what terms do you ask me to give up this castle of my sovereign, and who is it that makes the demand?”

“My lord baron,” replied the Englishman, “for such, if I mistake

not, is the person I am addressing; I am Major Bain, in the service of Her Majesty, the Queen, and their Excellencies the governors of New York and New England; I have travelled fast and far to pay you a visit, and I now demand an instant surrendry of your post, without other terms and conditions than those which necessarily pertain to civilized warfare; all who are taken will be regarded as prisoners of war, with the exception of a person styling himself Count Carlton, who to-day forfeited his parole of honor in my camp, and who, if taken, will be hung: I give you two minutes to answer!"

"Now by all the saints, but this is too insolent!" replied Montaigne, as his lieutenant silently ranged about eighty armed men beside his little corps, yet scarcely swelling his force to a hundred; "know then, Major Bain, if such you be, that you are caught in a trap; we have had ample notice of your coming, and have intentionally permitted you, unopposed, to scale our walls; four hundred of his majesty's troops stand this moment at my side—six hundred of our Indian allies await my call without the gates. Fool! did you think to surprise as old a warrior as I, or to take Castle Montaigne with less than a regiment? I now summon *you* to surrender, and give you but *one* minute to decide! Present arms!"

This ingenious falsehood, and the bold manner in which it was asserted, struck alarm into the heart of Major Bain, for he did not know how long Carlton's return had preceded his own arrival, and feared that he had really become the victim of that individual's treachery. There was danger also that a panic might be created among his men, which would prove highly disastrous, and a moment of most painful incertitude and indecision passed, during which he hesitated whether to await an attack or to commence one.

But the voice of the undisciplined Harry was at this moment heard, as he approached skulkingly from the direction of the French force, where he had been on a sort of private exploring expedition, being shielded from observation by the night-like hue with which Nature had invested him.

"Oh dat's a whopper, massa major!" he said, "I jis been right ober dare 'mong 'em, looking for de count; dare aint more'n fifty on 'em, 'pon honor!"

"We have certain intelligence of your strength, my lord," now retorted the Englishman promptly—"you cannot deceive us! once more I demand, will you spare the lives of your followers, and avert the scenes of horror which must ensue, when once the Indians are engaged? My men are impatient for the attack, nor shall I restrain them another minute."

"Let the signal be given for our allies to advance through the north gate! Fire!" shouted Montaigne, and almost in the same breath, a volley was given and returned, and the coincident order to charge, rang from the lips of the opposing commanders. For a few minutes a dreadful encounter ensued in which the clashing of bayonets, the shrieks of the wounded, the yells of the Indians, and the stentorian voices of the officers, outsonding the combined clamor, rang with varied and terrific tones through the air. Montaigne raged like a Lybian lion in the front of his little band, dealing death on every side with his single arm, and driving back the invaders at a dozen points, who, wherever his towering form was seen, and his hoarse shouts were heard, quailed and wavered as if before the onset of some supernatural foe. The darkness favored his attacks, and added to the mystic dread with which he was regarded by men, to whom his exploits, exaggerated by fame, had long been the themes of familiar story; while the Indians scarcely ventured near enough to his person, to hurl the charmed hatchets which had been prepared by incantation to penetrate his supposed enchanted armor. His followers, inspired by his presence and example, performed prodigies of valor, and were emulous to gain his cheers and approval, which were repeatedly bestowed even in the heat of the conflict. Many of the Iroquois warriors retreated, and stood clustered behind the main body of the combatants awaiting the issue, and the moment when, if successful, their own bloody work of extermination might begin;

but the English soldiers displayed a bravery, which more than compensated for the defection of their allies. If they faltered, they rallied; if they wavered, it was but to renew their attacks more vigorously than before, under the calm encouraging orders of their leader, who like his competitor shrank from no danger, and although severely wounded, remained in the midst of the *mêlée*.

But the contest was too unequal to be of long duration; the French party, despite their valor, was rapidly thinned, and was in momentary danger of being hemmed in on every side, when the baron issued orders to fall back, and a rapid retreat was effected into the main hall of the castle, while the shouts of the enemy rang long and loud through the air, waking the distant echoes in reply. They promptly pursued, but the massive door which closed behind the flying garrison withstood for a moment their attacks, and in another minute a dozen windows were bristling with the protruded guns of the soldiery from within, and a destructive fire was opened on the invaders, which caused them in turn to retreat, and seek some safer mode of attack. This, unfortunately for the besieged party, was of easy procurement; the guns upon the walls were in the undisputed possession of the invaders, and it only remained to turn them upon the castle with a certainty of its speedy demolition, unless by a *sortie*, or by aid from without, the weaker party might yet obtain relief.

Incited to wrath by the desperate resistance which he had met from so small a force, Major Bain was not tardy in availing himself of the advantages which he now possessed; the cannon were brought to bear on the doors and windows of the main hall and the south wing of the building, in which the soldiery were concentrated, and, before firing, the castle was once more summoned to a surrender. A voice, which was recognised as the baron's, demanded from an open casement, on what terms a capitulation was asked, or would be received, and although the proposition betrayed a sense of his desperate condition, his words and accents were still more defiant than conciliatory.

“On no terms,” replied Bain, wrathfully, “other than those which have been already named; the captured to be treated as prisoners of war, but death to Count Carlton!”

“*Death to Count Carlton!—death to Count Carlton!*” was repeated by a hundred hoarse throats, in a sullen shout, which told how deeply incensed were the enemy towards him, and how much of their loss they imputed to his baseness.

“I will consult with my officers,” replied Montaigne, dissembling his rage, and hoping momentarily for a diversion from without by an Indian force under command of the Lynx, who could not have failed, he thought, to hear the tumult of the battle; “I will consult with my officers, and give you my answer speedily; if you are really desirous of saving life——”

“Our matches are lighted, and by all the saints in your Popish calendar, I swear I will not wait one minute for an answer,” replied Bain.

“Then *fire!*” shouted the baron, to his men, a part of whom had been stationed, during the colloquy, at upper windows, which admitted of their again, to some extent, commanding the enemy’s position; “*Fire,* and let the dogs feel your strength—in three minutes we shall have relief.”

The scene which ensued was terrific beyond description. The feeble volley of the garrison, which served but to reveal, by its flashing light, the location of the doors and windows, and enabled the gunners to aim their pieces aright, was followed by the roar of artillery, by the crashing of pannels and casements, the jingling of glass, the groans of the dying, and the screams of the affrighted inmates of every part of the building, which rang in prolonged and wailing accents, awaking pity even in the stern hearts which caused their misery.

“There is no harm done, my boys!” exclaimed Montaigne, springing back to the window from which he had momentarily retreated; “that noise will wake up the Hurons, and in a few minutes we shall

have them with us; give them another round, my bull-dogs! and be sure to aim towards the guns."

His orders were obeyed, and the firing was again returned by a discharge of cannon more destructive than the former, accompanied by a volley of small arms, from some protected position on the walls; but scarcely had the roar of the guns died away when a messenger entered from a lower room to say that a dozen men had been killed by the shot, including Sergeant Grill, and that Lieutenant Leighton was dangerously wounded.

"I am sorry for it!" replied the baron, "but those who remain must fight the harder; now, my boys!" but as he spoke, he staggered backwards and dropped into the arms of his men, while another peal of musketry rang from without.

"Lieutenant Leighton says he has not twenty men alive below, my lord!" said another messenger, entering hastily. "He is himself dying, and he, therefore, takes the liberty of begging that you will spare the men and surrender."

"Never!" gasped the baron; "never—will I—surrender! There will soon—be help——"

He was borne to a couch which stood in the apartment and deposited upon it; a surgeon in attendance bent for a few moments above him, feeling meanwhile of his pulse; then turning sadly to the messenger, he said, "Tell Lieutenant Leighton that he commands this fortress!" and a groan of anguish burst from the stout hearts, who, suspending their labors, had gathered around their fallen lord.

The wounded lieutenant received the intelligence with great emotion, and hastened to follow his own convictions of duty by instantly surrendering the castle into the hands of his victorious enemy, who proceeded to take possession and receive the submission of the surviving soldiery. The destruction of life on both sides had been great, but the loss of the besieged party had been far larger in proportion to their number than that of the English. The Indians, as had been anticipated, were with some difficulty restrained from

falling upon the prisoners, none being more forward in this fiendish desire than those who had done the least towards achieving the victory.

Major Bain gave orders for the interment of the dead, and the care of the wounded, and placing a strong guard on the walls and at the gates, directed his men to hold themselves in readiness for a march at dawn against the neighboring Huron settlement. Count Carlton not appearing among the prisoners, he ordered a diligent search to be made for him among the fallen, and in every part of the castle. He paid a visit to the remains of the baron, in which solemn presence he encountered the half-distracted Blanche, and Myrtle, with Emily and the baroness, and several of the priests and domestics, to all of whom he gave assurances of protection, until the morrow, and permission then to depart to Montreal, or to such other French post as they might choose, and to take with them the body of the baron, or to bestow upon it, before leaving, such fitting burial as the time and place would permit.

"It will be my duty," he said, amidst the interrupting sobs and groans of his auditors, "to destroy the castle before leaving, and I shall be therefore under the necessity of hastening your departure."

"But the severely wounded and dying?" interposed a venerable priest: "they who can neither accompany you as prisoners, nor go with us? Surely you will make some provision for men who require both medical aid, and the consolations of religion."

"I have not overlooked their necessities," replied the major humanely; "a portion of the barracks will be left standing for their accommodation, and such of your order who desire, can remain with them; doubtless, also, some of your Indian allies will come to their assistance, after we have departed."

"The chapel, if your honor pleases, will better accommodate them," replied another, anxious to preserve a building hallowed by many sacred associations.

"The chapel will be destroyed," replied Bain, in tones that

admitted of no remonstrance,—“ it is a strong building, and might itself be turned into a fort.”

Blanche was with difficulty induced to withdraw from the side of her deceased parent, and to seek that quietude and restoration which her shocked and agitated heart required. Her grief for her father was most intense, despite all his harshness and severity towards her, and was aggravated by the thought that her own conduct, although dictated by the strictest sense of duty, had contributed to his fate by engrossing his attention, and thus causing a remissness and relaxation of his ordinary vigilance in defence of his post.

Scarcely had she reached her own room, when the astonishing intelligence was brought to her that Mr. Huntington was among the conquering army, and desired to be permitted to speak to her; but the consolation which the knowledge of his presence would otherwise have imparted, was now lost in the dreadful thought that he had been an actor in the scenes which had resulted so tragically to her nearest relative; nay, that perhaps his agency had chiefly caused the success of the attack. Was it possible, she asked herself, that he had been capable of using the knowledge which he had gained, during his stay at the castle, to aid in its overthrow, and in the destruction and subjugation of her friends and countrymen? True he had been greatly wronged and oppressed by that haughty and powerful man, who was now turned to clay, harmless as its kindred clods, but there was no justification for revenge, and above all for a revenge which included the innocent with the guilty. The thought that Henrich had been thus culpable was agonizing beyond endurance, and a confirmation of her suspicions must not only place a barrier between them which no time could remove, but would crumble, at a blow, her bright ideal of human excellence and worth.

But Henrich came, and all these apprehensions were dispelled; he hastened, indeed, unaccused, to disclaim the very acts of which she had so much reason to suspect him, and to place his conduct in the irreproachable light, which truth admitted and required. He

had neither by advice nor action contributed in the slightest degree to the surprise or capture of the castle ; he had entered within the walls with that portion of the enemy to whom the gates had been opened by the scaling party, and had remained a passive spectator of the scenes which ensued. Unspeakable was Miss Montaigne's relief to learn these gratifying facts—to learn that it was in reality as a prisoner of the invading army, and not as an enemy, or as a retributor of private wrongs, that Henrich had returned ; and she rejoiced that now, in the midst of the horrors which surrounded her, she might still look for advice, consolation, and support, to one who had so often before shown his willingness and ability to aid her.

Yet she did not forget amidst this returning calm, that her plighted promise to wed the count was still binding upon her, if he yet lived, and should claim its fulfilment. The decease of her father, so far from releasing her from the obligation, had given to it additional force. It was a promise *to the dead*, who could not claim its performance, who could not reproach her for dereliction, and thus it became doubly imperative. She shuddered as this dreadful remembrance crossed her mind, but banished it for a time, with some indefinite hope of relief.

The fate of Carlton, meanwhile, remained undiscovered. He had taken but little part in the engagement, and it was supposed that, impelled by the consciousness of his peculiar danger, he had fled to the forest before the gates were fully in the possession of the foe. Major Bain was greatly disappointed at not finding him ; he did not believe, however, that he had escaped, and ordered the strictest vigilance to prevent his passing out, either in disguise or otherwise, if he was yet within the fort.

In the morning he carried out the plan of action on which he had resolved ; he attacked the Huron village (from which the warriors and other inhabitants, warned of his approach, and conscious of their inability to withstand him, had fled with their effects), and burned it to the ground, destroying at the same time, with the cruel policy

of war, the growing harvests around it. He next fired the chapel, having first permitted the weeping priests to remove what they chose of its sacred contents, and while its lurid flames were gilding the heavens, the torches were preparing for the nobler pile, which had so long been the ornament and pride of the now rapidly desolated district.

Prompt and speedy movements were still essential to his complete success : he had struck a flying blow, and it was necessary to retire before the more inland regions could be aroused to unite with the forces of the Lynx and Anak, and dispute his egress from the country. The wounded prisoners were removed to that portion of the barracks which it had been determined to spare for their benefit, and the ladies and priests having been allowed to remove their effects, such of the residue of the property as was portable, was speedily taken possession of by the soldiery, and then the devouring flame was communicated at once by a score of willing hands to as many different parts of the edifice.

From a little distance, the now re-forming army of invaders watched the progress of the fire, while preparing to withdraw from the scene of their devastations—and in another part of the trampled and blood-stained court, near the spared building, were assembled the mournful group who had been set at liberty by their captor, and who, being yet unprepared to depart, remained unwilling spectators of the melancholy scene. Henrich was with these, once more at the side of Blanche as her friend and adviser, having obtained his full liberty by the courtesy of the English commander ; yet he was not without apprehension that the withdrawal of the army would be the signal for the return of his rival from some lurking-place in the wilderness. Such an event might render his own position highly perilous in a territory where the count's authority would now perhaps be temporarily recognised, and the more by reason of his own recent and unreversed sentence of banishment, and the suspicions to which

he had rendered himself liable of having advised and abetted the invaders.

But Carlton was not in the wilderness. He had heard, with unspeakable terror, his name excepted in the offered terms of quarter made by the English commander ; he had heard these terms repeated with the same explicit and fearful reservation ; had listened to the hoarse shouts of the soldiery applauding his anticipated doom, and had felt, at that moment, in his coward and guilty breast, more than the pains of death. For a while, encouraged by the confident language of Montaigne, he had hoped for victory, and dreading the baron's wrath and scorn for pusillanimity, had made some feint of aiding in the contest at points where the danger was least. As the battle went on, and its issue became more certain, he had sought to flee, but his frightened imagination had peopled the whole court with vigilant guards watching to intercept him, and he did not dare to venture forth. Too frantic for reflection, he yet remembered a secret room and its ingeniously contrived entrance which had once been shown to him by Montaigne, and he hastened to make it at least a temporary refuge.

In an upper chamber, a large iron chandelier was suspended from a circular panneling in the ceiling ; seemingly immovable, it could yet be drawn down by touching a spring at the end of the rod which supported it, and with it descended not only the panelling to which it was attached, but an extending ladder of rope, forming an entrance into a room above, to which there was no other access. When the ponderous chandelier was drawn back to its place, and the fastening adjusted, there was no longer any trace of the passage, and the upper apartment, which was small, was also unexposed to observation from without, being lighted and ventilated only by a small window in the roof.

To this retreat Carlton, in his terror, had fled, to avoid the immediate danger, for he rightly conjectured that the first movement that followed victory would be a vigorous and diligent search for him.

He had intended to descend during the night, and in disguise or otherwise, attempt an escape to the forest ; but this design was defeated by an unexpected occurrence. The chamber with which his hiding-place communicated was appropriated, after the engagement, to the use of several of the wounded English soldiers, a circumstance which their voices and groans plainly proclaimed to the entrapped count. To discover himself to these, who imputed all their injury to his perfidy, would be a betrayal to certain death. It was late in the morning when they were removed, and then the precincts of the castle were swarming with the foreign soldiery, and flight was still impossible ; he remained half senseless in his retreat, hoping against hope for the several contingencies which might yet save him. The enemy might be attacked and driven off by the Indians ; they might not destroy the castle, or they might only set fire to it and depart, without waiting to see it consumed, and thus afford him an opportunity of escape.

These, with other hope-woven fallacies, occupied his mind for a while, and were only dispelled by the smell of fire, by the crackling sound of its progress, and by the thin wreaths of smoke which began to force themselves up through the floor of his apartment. Appalled, he flew to the passage, and opening it, was met by a stifling current of heated air ; the room was in flames ; he could not descend but to instant suffocation. Closing the aperture, he piled the scant furniture of his room together, and from the summit of the heap reached the skylight, and dashing it open climbed to the roof, at once discovering the assembled multitude below, and revealing himself to their view. A shout from the soldiery announced his appearance, but the spectacle was too awful for exultation ; the circling smoke was already enveloping his figure, as he hastily traversed the summit of the building and approached its edge, now brushing the blinding clouds from before him, and now extending his arms, as if imploring pity and aid from those who had no power to assist him.

Horror held motionless the beholders ; but Myrtle, with a piercing

shriek, darted from the side of her friends, and rushing towards the main entrance of the castle, disappeared within the burning pile. The distracted baroness followed with faltering steps, but a score of soldiers, obeying not less the impulse of their own hearts than the quick signal of the officer, sprang past her and reached the doorway, though only to battle for a moment with the heated vapors that encountered them, and fall back proclaiming the impossibility of rescue. As they retreated, however, a young Mohawk brave sped past them at a bound, and entered the hall. Unbreathing, to avoid the stifling air, he groped for the main stairway, which he rightly judged Myrtle had attempted to ascend, and, mounting its hot steps, gained the first landing, and saw the white robes of the prostrate maiden before him. To seize the light burden and bear it back to the outer air was but the work of a second, and the prolonged shouts of the spectators spoke their gratification, and their applause of the heroic deed.

Myrtle was borne senseless into the barracks by her anxious friends, and the attention of the throng, momentarily diverted by this frightful episode, was again given to the unhappy Carlton. He now stood at the edge of the parapet which overlooked that part of the court where the people were assembled, and seemed to contemplate a leap from his dizzy height. Now he shouted for help—for a ladder—for a rope—for something to break his fall; now he ran back and looked vainly into the aperture through which he had ascended, and anon he sought to gain the less elevated roof of a wing of the building, but was prevented by the flames, which had already broken forth in that direction. While he hoped, and hesitated, and despaired, a thick column of smoke, spangled with sparkling cinders, rolled towards him, and enveloping his figure in its murky pall, concealed it from the view of the horrified spectators. A half-stifled cry proceeded from the midst of the whirling mass, which, growing blacker and blacker with continued accessions, and rising higher and higher into the air, seemed like one of the *genii* of

oriental fable, released from the confinement of centuries, and expanding its gigantic bulk above the diminutive prison in which it had been so long compressed. Now revealing, through its rent folds its staggering victim, and now closing again around him, it moved, with solemn gyrations, slowly onward, and passing, at length, left the unhappy man prostrate in its path, struggling, but vainly attempting to rise.

An Indian chief who stood by the side of Major Bain, whispered a moment to the latter, who, unreplying, turned away with an agitated air, and the savage, taking his silence for assent to his really humane proposition, passed a brief word of command to a small division of his men. A dozen rifles were raised simultaneously, and as their sharp report rang upon the air, the body of the count rolled lifeless down a slight descent of the roof, to a point where the greedy flames were raging and raged higher as they received it. He had passed from earth, and his ungathered ashes mingled with those of his lofty funeral pyre.

In another hour the triumphing army had vanished from the scene of their victory, and were rapidly pursuing their homeward route; they were accompanied by the liberated Seabury, who, having been at large on his parole, had taken no part in the combat, although his soldier spirit had chafed at the intangible fetters which restrained him from doing so.

Myrtle's injuries proved severe, and the intelligence of Carlton's fate gave a shock to her mind, which added greatly to her sufferings, and increased the peril of her situation. For several days the fair patient remained an inmate of an apartment in the barracks, attended with kindness and solicitude by her friends, who waited only her convalescence to quit for ever a spot rife with the memory of so many tragedies. Their anxious hopes in her behalf were not disappointed, and on the third day they were enabled to set out in boats, for Montreal, accompanied by several of the returned Hurons as guides and assistants. The baron's remains, in the interval, had

been interred within the undemolished walls of his ruined castle, Blanche having been prevailed on with difficulty to relinquish the idea of transporting the body over their long and difficult journey. The priests remained at their post faithful to the wounded men in their charge, of whom several were evidently destined to require the last consolations of religion and the solemn rites of sepulture at their hands.

From such a scene of ruin and misery went Blanche and Henrich, with Emily, Myrtle, and the baroness; their tears were many, and their hearts were sad, some with their own bitter grief, and some with sympathetic sorrow.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

“————— She is mine own,
And I as rich in having such a jewel,
As twenty seas, if all their sands were pearl,
The water nectar, and the rocks pure gold.”—*Shakspeare.*

THE Marquis Vaudreuil received early intelligence of the disastrous blow which had been inflicted upon the province of New France, and having heard that the family of his deceased friend had taken refuge at Montreal, he promptly despatched a vessel to that post, to convey them to the capital, where a fitting home was meanwhile prepared for their reception. He did not grieve deeply over the loss of Carlton, whose evil reputation had followed him from Paris, and had recently reached the ears of the deceived and indignant viceroy, causing him deeply to regret his agency in commending his nephew to the good will of the baron.

Months passed away, during which Huntington, who had accompanied his friends to Quebec, continued a resident of that city, and an ever-welcomed friend and visitor of Miss Montaigne. They were speedily betrothed, and ere yet the autumn had fully passed, Henrich, unwilling that Blanche should spend the wintry season in a clime so ungenial, had obtained her consent to an immediate union, with a view to a journey to England and a sojourn until spring, amid its milder airs. If inducements were needed, none could have been presented to Blanche's mind of greater efficacy; already had she pined, with that love of country which forms so commendable a trait in almost every heart, to tread again the green soil and gaze upon the bright landscapes which had been familiar to her child-

hood, and which were ever dear to memory. They were married without ostentation, at the mansion of the marquis, who, finding his efforts to prolong their stay in Quebec useless, desired, with characteristic kindness, to give his especial sanction to their union, and to retain the bridal party, at least for the first happy week, under his hospitable roof.

Emily, of course, was to return with them, and Blanche, who had acquired the most sisterly feeling for Myrtle, spared no pains to induce her also to accompany them, but neither the baroness nor Vaudreuil would consent to such a deprivation. The marquis, indeed, who had consented to administer upon the large estate of his friend for the benefit of the heirs, urged that her presence in the province might be essential to his labors, and offered both herself and her mother a welcome home in his own house. This kindness was accepted for the time, and the sisters parted with mutual tears and regret, for although their acquaintance had been brief, the extraordinary events through which they had passed had served to rapidly develop their respective characters, and a communion of suffering had endeared them to each other.

Henrich, Blanche, and Emily sailed for Havre, and having reached that port in safety, they passed into the Netherlands, and thence crossed to England. In the ensuing summer they returned to New York, where they took up their abode, greatly to the delight of old Jacobus, who had never ceased to reflect over his semi-hourly pipe, upon his interview with the baffled ensign, and upon the happy train of smoke-generated ideas which had resulted in the despatch of Harry and Ruppy to warn the forest fugitives of their danger.

Myrtle continued to reside with the marquis, the object of much unheeded admiration, and a mourner in heart, although not in apparel, for the unworthy Carlton. The decease of her mother, three years later, left her still more desolate, and peace having then been established between France and England, she accepted an earnest invitation from Blanche and Henrich to remove to New York, and

make their house her future home. There she became contented and cheerful: her heart was gradually weaned from the memory of its misapplied affection, and she became at the age of twenty-three, the happy wife of a young English gentleman, of great worth, who knew her whole history, and whose attachment for her was unbounded.

Miss Roselle remained a welcome inmate of Henrich's family, and, professedly from choice, a member of the single sisterhood; having relinquished, with her matrimonial aspirations, her airs and affectation, it is not improbable indeed that she may have found admirers among the many visitors of her cousins, but none, it appeared, who possessed sufficient attractions to tempt her from what she called her chosen path of celibacy.

The cessation of hostilities between the provinces enabled Henrich to visit Quebec, and render more fully available to Blanche and Myrtle their large property, of which the marquis was found to have proved a faithful steward. There he heard of the welfare of the Lynx and Anak, for whom, in token of his regard, he left highly valuable presents, of the kind most likely to suit their tastes: including among the gifts to the former, one which he knew would be beyond price in his estimation. This was the enchanted rifle, so called, of which, in his character as the Beaver, he had made such effective use, and which he had now been careful to bring with him for the benefit of his Indian friend.

The happiness of Henrich and Blanche remained unimpaired by farther calamities; if much suffering had been crowded into a short period of their lives, it was followed by a long exemption from trouble. They were not even annoyed by the continued abode, in their vicinity, of the evil man to whom so much of their misery, and at the same time, so large a share of their felicity was owing, for in the very year of their return to New York, Lord Cornbury was removed from his office by his relative, the Queen, for official oppres-

sion and malconduct, and Grover, who was a satellite of the profligate governor, returned with him to England.

Jacobus Waldron lived to the ripe age of ninety, and so happy were his declining days rendered by the assiduous kindness of "Hetty's Hanreek" as he was wont to call his grandson, that he gradually ceased looking for that sudden influx of fortune which had been all his lifetime on the eve of overwhelming him with its golden waves. Nay, he began to suspect, with the wisdom of age, that he had already found more than his anticipated treasure in his faithful and affectionate children, and his changed hopes, placed now on worthier objects than wealth, were looking beyond those solemn portals which Death, with no forbidding aspect, stood ready to fling open for his exit.

Harry Bolt returned with the army of Major Bain, which did not succeed in escaping from the French territory without some marks of the vengeance of the Lynx and Anak, who, rallying their scattered warriors, intercepted the invaders on the banks of the Sorelle, and caused them no little damage. The chief triumph of the Indians, however, was in effecting the release of the prisoners, about sixty in number, of whom the English officer did not greatly regret to be disencumbered.

Harry was discharged from the army with great credit and no small bounty, and the story of his exploits soon became public in the city, rendering him an object of general interest, and affixing upon him for life, the highly relished *sobriquet* of "Major Bolt." Jule, ever gleeful and grinning, became his wife, and in a comfortable home, provided by their grateful friends, they lived in much happiness, disturbed only on the part of the negress, by imaginary calls at every dawn, in the sharp voice of Mrs. Sniff, denouncing her as an idle huzzy, and bidding her rise and begin her daily work. This wore away, however, with the wearing years; Harry, who had entered into traffic, in a small way, soon drew around him many friends,

gradually extending his business, and acquiring a competence which soon enabled him to boast that if Jule were yet a slave, he could purchase not only her, but her mistress also, unless the latter held herself at a far higher valuation than did either he or Mrs. Major Bolt.

THE END.



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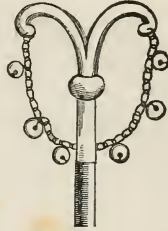
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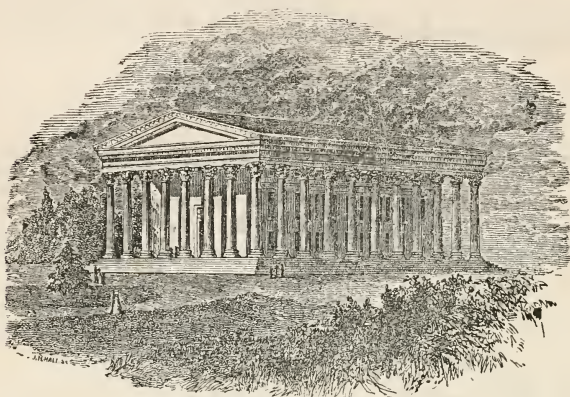
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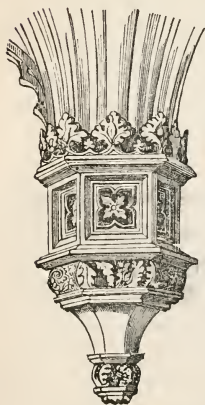
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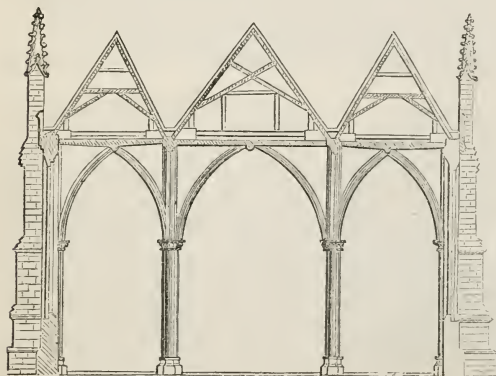
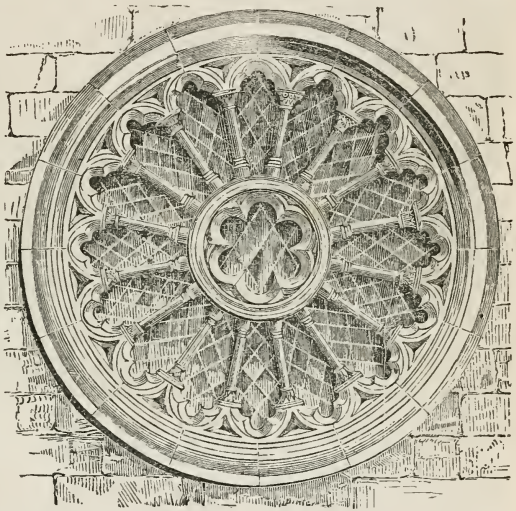
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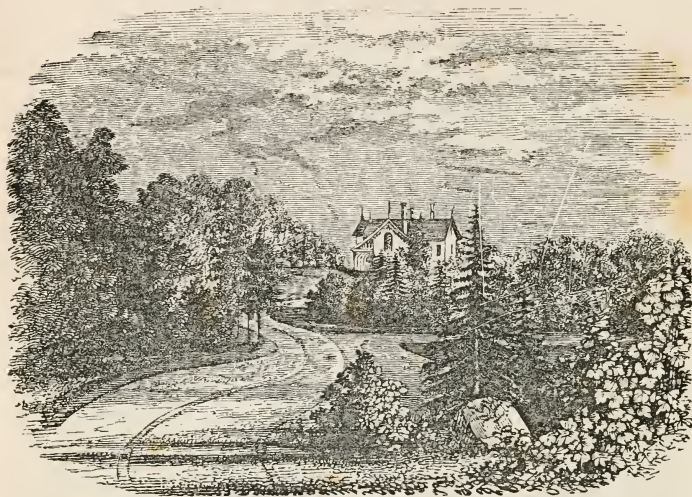
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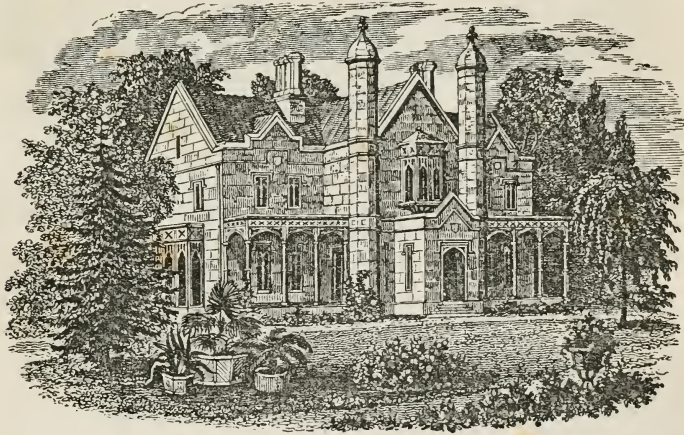
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